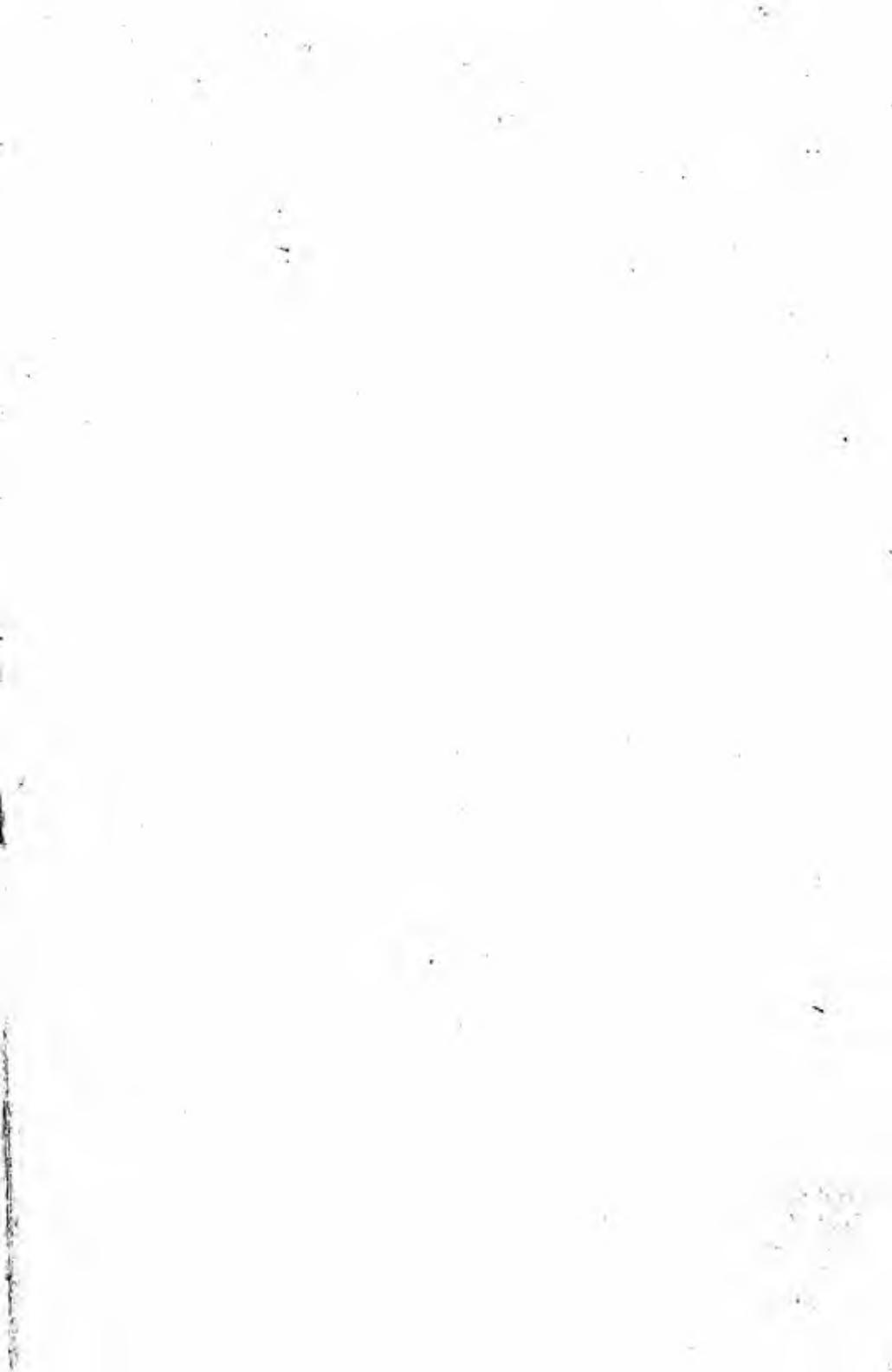


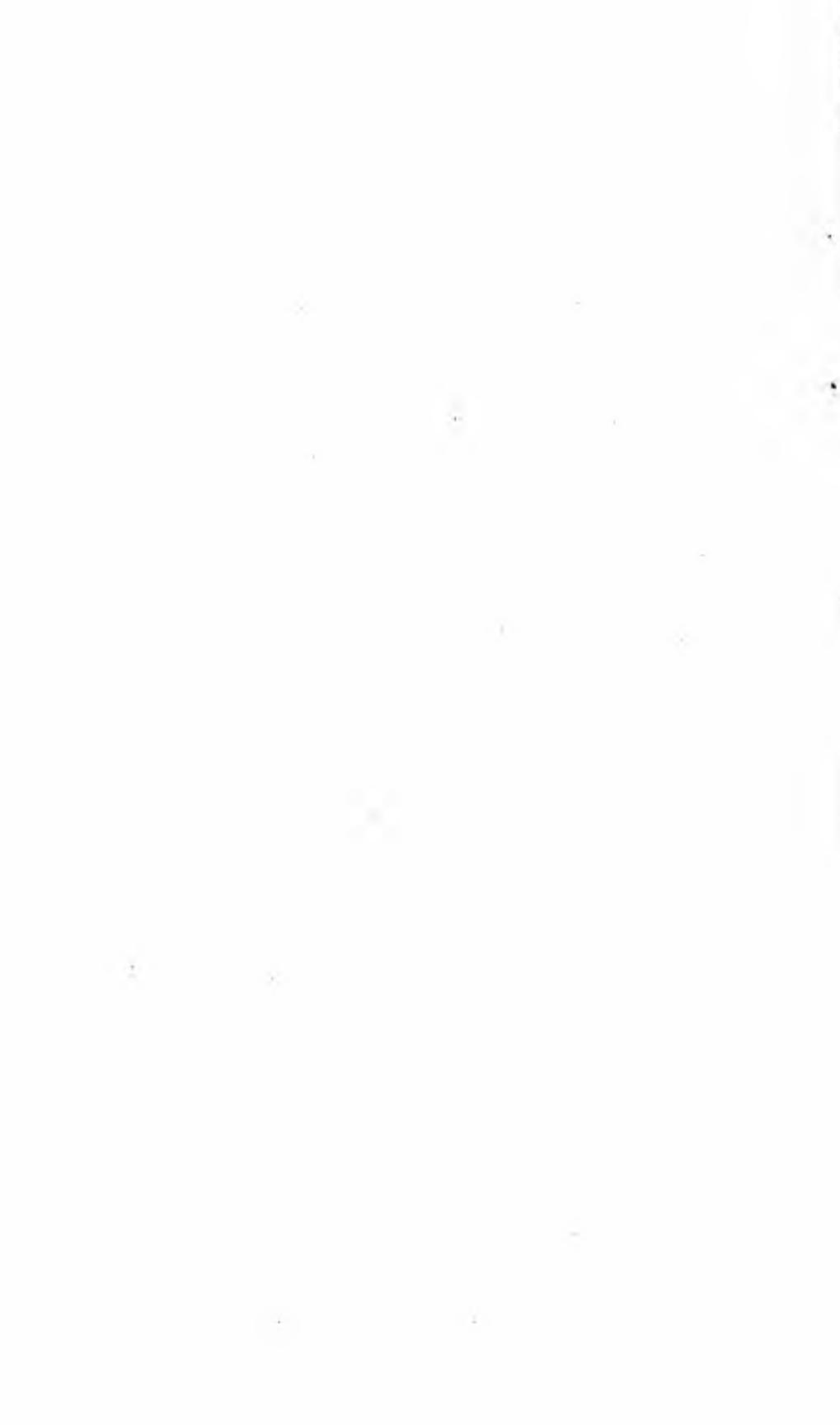
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# THE HOLY LAKE OF THE ACTS OF RĀMA

*An English Translation of*  
**TULASI DĀS'S RĀMACARITAMĀNASĀ**

By

**W. DOUGLAS P. HILL, M.A.**

*Formerly Scholar of King's College, Cambridge  
Late Principal of Jay Nārāyan's School, Banaras*

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## P R E F A C E

SEVENTY-FIVE years have gone by since Mr F. S. Growse began to translate into English the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulasi Dās. Others have translated portions of the poem, especially the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, but his is the only rendering of the whole work. It may be asked what purpose is to be served by a new translation.

During the past three-quarters of a century scholars have been able to produce a more authentic text of the poem, and the edition used by Mr Growse must now be considered far inferior to that of the Nāgari Pracāriṇī Sabhā or to that of which I have made use. Moreover, many able pandits have composed commentaries which help in the understanding of difficult passages. Oriental scholarship will always owe a debt of gratitude to the pioneer in translation, and my own debt will be obvious to any who are acquainted with Mr Growse's version; but it will also be evident that, largely owing to the limitations of the time at which he wrote, his rendering is full of minor errors; further, he has completely misunderstood the meaning of some important passages. The following example will suffice.

At the end of *Aranyakāṇḍa*, Chanda 7, Rāma brings the battle with Khara, Dūṣana and Trisirā to a close by the use of a magical device: *Dekhahin parasapara Rāma kari saṅgrāma ripu dala lari maryo.*

'The enemy saw each his friend as Rāma, and joining battle with one another, they fought and died.'

Mr Growse translates:

'While they were yet looking at one another, he finished the battle, and the army of the enemy all perished fighting.'

While it would be rash for any translator of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* to claim that he has always understood the poet's words, it is hoped that the present rendering, helped as it has been by the work of modern scholars, has achieved a greater degree of accuracy.

The edition I have used is that published by the Gitā Press of Gorakhpur (1947), with a *sikā* by Hanuman Prasad Poddar. I have been assured by my old friend, Pt Ambika Datta Upadhyaya, M.A. of the Banaras Hindu University, who has helped me with valuable notes, that this edition is the most authoritative published

to date. It certainly differs from most other versions that I have consulted in preferring the *ardua lectio*.

I should warn students that the readings of various editions differ so widely that it is essential that the present translation should be studied with the version of the *Gītā Press*. The *tikā* is straightforward and sensible and does not indulge in those fantastic interpretations that mar so many commentaries. I have almost always been able to prefer the *tikākār's* explanation of doubtful verses, and when I have felt compelled to differ from his exposition, I have generally stated the fact in a footnote.

In the transliteration of proper nouns I have used the Sanskrit form with the Hindi nominative termination; but, while regularly adding the final short -a, silent in Hindi prose, to such names as Bharata, Śatrughna or Rāvaṇa in the Appendix, I have allowed myself licence in the translation, preferring to write, for example, Rāma, Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, but omitting the final vowel in some names, as Bharat, Lakṣman, Rāvan and Vibhiṣan.

Hindu gods and goddesses have many names; Śiva, for example, is also Hara, Śaṁbhu, Śaṁkara, etc.; Pārvatī is also Bhavāṇī, Girijā, Umā, etc. Rāma, too, is called by many names marking his descent from Raghu. I have for the most part retained these names in my translation, partly to avoid monotony and partly because the student of Hinduism should accustom himself to these common variations.

The following books will be found useful:

*The Rāmāyaṇa of Tulsī Dās*, by F. S. Growse.

*The Rāmāyan of Tulsī Dās*, by J. M. Macfie.

*Notes on Tulsī Dās*, by Sir George Grierson.

*The Theology of Tulsī Dās*, by J. N. Carpenter.

*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Chap. ix, by S. Radhakrishnan.

#### Hindi :

Pt Ram Naresh Tripathi's edition of the *Rāmacaritamānasa*.

*Gosvāmī Tulsī Dās*, by Pt Ram Chandra Shukla.

*Hindi Sāhitya kā Itihās*, pp. 100-25, by Pt Ram Chandra Shukla.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- A. *Ayodhyākāṇḍa.*
- Ar. *Aranyakāṇḍa.*
- B. *Bālakāṇḍa.*
- C. *Caupāī.*
- Ch. *Chanda.*
- D. *Dohā.*
- K. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa.*
- L. *Laṅkākāṇḍa.*
- S. *Sundarakāṇḍa or Sorathā.*
- Śl. *Śloka.*
- U. *Uttarakāṇḍa.*

## INTRODUCTION

### THE LIFE OF TULASI DĀS: HISTORY AND TRADITION

Tulasi Dās was born in 1532 A.D.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Bhaktasindhu* and the *Brihadrāmāyaṇamāhātmya* his birthplace was Hastināpur, a village near Rājapur. Some authorities say that he was born at Hājipur, near Citrakūṭa. Sir George Grierson favours Tārī in the Doab, and Pt Ram Naresh Tripathi offers interesting evidence for the claim of Sūkarakheta, or Soron, where Tulasi Dās studied later with his *guru*. But according to common tradition he was born at Rājapur on the R. Jumna, in the district of Bāndā.

Tradition states that he was a Dūbe of the Parāsara *gotra* of the Sarayūpāriṇa Brāhmans.<sup>2</sup> His father was Ātmā Rāma Dūbe, the headman of a village on the Jumna, whose ancestors came from the village of Patyanūja. His mother was Hulasi. He appears to have been born in *abhuktamūla*, at the end of the asterism Jyeṣṭhā and at the beginning of that of Mūla, an inauspicious period, and according to custom to have been abandoned by his parents.<sup>3</sup> Beni Mādhava Dās, whose *Gosāīn Caritra* is lost but partly summarized in the *Śivasinhasaroja*, states that when Tulasi Dās was born, he was like a child of five and had all his teeth; he did not cry, but repeatedly uttered the name of Rāma. His father thought that he was a monster and his mother, fearing that her husband might do the child an injury, entrusted him to the care of a servant-girl, who died not many years later. Ātmā Rāma refused to take the child back and he was compelled to beg from door to door, until he was adopted by a Rāmānandi *sādhu* named Narahari.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Grierson, in his Notes on Tulasi Dās, makes elaborate calculations, with the help of Pt Sudhakara Dvivedi, to determine the exact dates ascertainable in the life of the poet.

<sup>2</sup> Authorities differ. Some state that he was a Kannauj Brāhmaṇ, others that he was a Sarbariya, others a Sanādhyā Brāhmaṇ.

<sup>3</sup> See *Vinaya Patrikā*, 227 : 2.

<sup>4</sup> See the first *Soraphā* in the *Bālakāṇḍa*.

The boy's name was Rāma Bolā and he was probably called Tulasi Dās by his *guru*, from whom he learnt the story of Rāma at Sūkarakheta.<sup>1</sup> He later went to live at Kāśī, or Banaras, on Pañcagangā Ghāt, where Śesasanātana-jī taught him the Vedas, Vedāngas, Darśanas, Itihāsas and Purāṇas. After studying there for some fifteen years he returned to Rājapur, but found no member of his family still living nor the house in which he was born.

He then married a girl named Ratnāvalī, the daughter of Dina-bandhu Pāthak, by whom he had a son, Tāraka, who died in infancy. Tulasi Dās was devoted to his wife, and on one occasion when she had gone without his permission to visit her parents, he forded a river in pursuit of her. But Ratnāvalī had become a devotee of Rāma and greeted him with the following *dohās*:

*Lāja na lāgata āpa ko daure āyahu sātha  
Dhika dhika aise prema ko kaha kahauṁ maiṁ nātha  
Asthi-carma-maya deha mama tāmen̄ jaisi prīti  
Taisi jau Šrīrāma man̄ hoti na tau bhava bhīti.*

Are you not ashamed of following me here? A curse on such love! What can I say to you, my husband? My body is nothing but bone and skin; and if such love as you have for it had been devoted to the Lord Rāma, you would have had no reason to dread rebirth!

Moved by his wife's reproaches, Tulasi Dās at once abandoned all home ties and returning to Kāśī became a strictly ascetic votary of Rāma. After staying for four months at Ayodhyā he made a pilgrimage to a number of sacred places—Jagannāthpuri, Rāmeśvara, Dvārakā, Badarikāśrama, Kailāsa and Mānasasarovara. He stayed for some time at Citrakūṭa, where he consorted with a number of saints and met the poet Sūr Dās. Thence he returned to Ayodhyā, where he began to compose the *Rāmacaritamānasa* on Tuesday, 30 March 1574 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Tulasi Dās was a Smārta Vaiṣṇava, and he is said to have fallen out with the Vairāgīs of Ayodhyā, not being willing to comply with their regulations concerning the cooking and eating of food. He therefore returned to Kāśī, after completing the *Aranyakāṇḍa*, and lived there until his death on Thursday, 24 July 1623 A.D.

Apparently his life at Kāśī was a troubled one. He was attacked by orthodox panditas for writing a sacred story in the vernacular,

<sup>1</sup> B.D. 30ff.

<sup>2</sup> See B.C. 34.

persecuted by Muslims, Śaivas and Vallabha Gosāīns, and towards the latter part of his life afflicted by boils. He stayed first of all at Hanumān Phāṭak, moved thence to Gopāl Mandir, and finally to Asī Ghāṭ, where he died. His house is still preserved and opened once a year for worship.

## LEGEND

Much of the above account depends on unreliable tradition. The truth is that very little can be certainly known of the poet's life apart from occasional references in his poems. A wealth of legends has grown up about his name, some of which are found in Priyā Dās's commentary (1705) on the *Bhaktamālā* of Nābhā-jī (fl. c. 1600 A.D.). The following are typical:

In early life he composed a number of verses in Sanskrit, but these all disappeared during the night. He then dreamed that Śiva commanded him to write in vernacular, and when he awoke the god told him to write a Hindi poem in Ayodhyā.

When Tulasi Dās was an old man, he came in the course of his wanderings to his father-in-law's village and craved hospitality of his wife without recognizing her. She brought him fuel, rice, vegetables and ghī and he began to prepare a meal. After a little she realized who he was but did not disclose her own identity. She offered him pepper, salt and camphor, but he told her that he had some in his wallet. In the morning she told him who she was and asked if she might stay with him. When he refused, she reproached him for carrying so much in his wallet and yet being unwilling to add her to the number of his possessions; whereupon he gave away all that he had and departed.

One day a ghost who lived in a mango tree on which Tulasi Dās was accustomed to pour water appeared to the poet, and thanking him for the daily draught told him to ask for a boon. Tulasi asked for a vision of Rāma. The ghost advised him to go to a certain temple to hear the recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; there he would meet with Hanumān, who would show him the Lord. This he did, and Hanumān bade him go to Cītrakūṭa. After staying there for a few days he came by chance on a *Rām Līlā* in which Rāma, Lakṣman, Sītā and the rest were represented at the conquest of Lankā and the return to Ayodhyā. On his way home he met a Brāhmaṇ (who was Hanumān in disguise) and remarked on the beauty of the *Rām Līlā* he had witnessed. 'Are you mad?' said the Brāhmaṇ. 'This

is not the season for the *Rām Lilā*!' When he returned to the scene of the play, the actors were nowhere to be seen. He then realized that he had seen no *Rām Lilā* but Rāma and the rest in person.

A thief came by night to break into the poet's house, but was frightened away by the sight of a dark-hued watchman armed with bow and arrows. The same thing happened for three successive nights. When the thief confessed and asked Tulasi Dās who the mysterious watchman was, the poet realized that his property had been protected by Rāma. He thereupon distributed all his possessions among the Brāhmans, giving some to the thief as well. The thief gave up his evil habits and became a devotee.

Tulasi Dās raised the husband of a Brāhmaṇī widow from the dead. News of this event reached the emperor at Delhi, who sent for the poet and asked him to perform a miracle. Tulasi replied that he knew no magic but only the name of the Lord Rāmacandra. The emperor was furious and ordered the poet to be kept in prison till he should comply with his request. But Hanumān sent myriads of monkeys, who entered the city and began to destroy the palace. The emperor went to the prison and fell at Tulasi's feet, imploring his pardon. The poet prayed Hanumān to withdraw his monkeys, and the emperor promised to leave Delhi and found a new city.

The following legends concern the friendship between Tulasi Dās and Nābhā-jī, the author of the *Bhaktamālā*:

One day Nābhā-jī went to see Tulasi Dās at Kāśī; but Tulasi was engaged in meditation and Nābhā-jī had to return to Brīndāban without seeing him. When Tulasi realized what had happened, he at once went to Brīndāban to visit Nābhā-jī and apologize. Nābhā-jī was entertaining a party of Vaiṣṇavas and Tulasi took a humble seat in an obscure corner. Nābhā-jī saw him but deliberately paid no attention to him, not even offering him a dish for his portion of the feast. Tulasi took up a *sādhū*'s shoe, saying, 'What better dish could I have than this?' Moved by his extreme humility, Nābhā-jī arose and embraced him.

On another occasion the two poets accompanied other Vaiṣṇavas to worship at the temple of Kṛiṣṇa Gopāla. Some of the Vaiṣṇavas said, 'He has deserted his own Rāma to worship in the temple of Kṛiṣṇa!' To this Tulasi Dās replied, 'How am I to describe the representation of Kṛiṣṇa which I see today? Not till he appear with bow and arrows in his hands will Tulasi bow his head before

him.' Immediately Kṛiṣṇa's image changed its form; his flute became an arrow and his reed a bow.

### THE POEMS OF TULASI DĀS

Apart from the *Rāmacaritamānasa* some twenty-one poems have been attributed to Tulasi Dās; but of these only twelve are considered by most scholars to be from his pen.

1. *Gitāvalī*.—The story of Rāma, written in sonnets to be sung. It exhibits the tender side of Rāma's character. It is said to have been composed at Cītrakūṭa shortly after the poet's meeting with Sūr Dās.

2. *Kavitta Rāmāyaṇa*.—The story of Rāma in the *kavitta*, *ghanākṣari*, *chappaya* and *savaiyā* metres, exhibiting the majestic side of Rāma's character. Some occasional verses, composed by Tulasi Dās, have been added at a later date to the last *kāṇḍa*. Grierson dates the poem between 1612 and 1614 A.D.

3. *Dohāvalī*.—A moral work in *dohā* and *sorathā* metres. It contains 572 *dohās*, 239 of which occur in other poems by Tulasi Dās—129 in the *Rāma-satasai*.

4. *Rāma-satasai*.—A poem in seven *sargas*, each containing approximately 100 *dohās*. It is the only work attributed to Tulasi Dās which contains a systematic exposition of his religious beliefs. The first *sarga* teaches the doctrine of faith (*bhakti*) as affection (*prema*); the second, of faith in its highest form (*parābhakti*) as adoration (*upāsanā*); the third gives a description of the essence of Rāma (*Rāmarasa*) in a number of obscure riddles; the fourth teaches the path of self-knowledge (*ātmabodha*); the fifth, the law of action (*karma*); the sixth, the doctrine of knowledge (*jñāna*), emphasizing the necessity of a spiritual guide for the perfect knowledge of the mystery of the Name; and the seventh is a treatise on the duties of kings and their subjects.

Doubt has been cast on the authenticity of this poem; at least part of it has been attributed to a later Tulasi Dās. Grierson dates it, doubtfully, Thursday, 9 April 1584 A.D.

5. *Kṛiṣṇa Gitāvalī*.—A collection of sixty-one songs in honour of Kṛiṣṇa, written in the Braj dialect. The style differs from that of the poet's other works, and some scholars deny its authenticity. It is said to have been written at Cītrakūṭa shortly after Tulasi Dās's meeting with Sūr Dās.

6. *Vinaya-patrikā*.—279 petitions. The first 43 are addressed to various deities, rivers, sacred places and the heroes and heroine

of the *Rāmāyana*; the next 234 to Rāma; in the 278th the poet addresses the whole court, and the last hymn records the successful result of his petitions.

The following legend relates to the composition of this poem. One day a murderer came on a pilgrimage to Kāśī, begging alms in the name of Rāma. Tulasi Dās summoned him to his house, fed him on consecrated food, and declaring him purified, sang praises to the Lord. The Brāhmans of Kāśī challenged him to justify his action. Tulasi bade them study the scriptures, saying that the truth had not yet entered their hearts. They replied that they were aware of the power of the Name but doubted that a murderer could obtain salvation. Tulasi asked them how he could convince them that his action had been justified, and they agreed that if the sacred bull of Śiva would eat from the murderer's hand, they would confess that they were wrong. The man was taken to the temple and the bull ate out of his hand.

This incident brought about the conversion of thousands of men, and this so enraged Kaliyuga that he appeared to Tulasi Dās and threatened to devour him unless he promised to put a stop to this revival of piety. Terrified, the poet begged for the aid of Hanumān, who advised him to become a plaintiff in Rāma's court. 'Compose a *vinaya-patrikā*', he said, 'and I will get an order passed on it by the master and be empowered to punish Kaliyuga. Otherwise I cannot do so, as he is the king of the present age.'

7. *Rāmajñā-praśnāvali*.—Seven books of seven chapters, each containing seven pairs of *dohās*. Each chapter forms a summary of the corresponding *kānda* of the *Rāmāyana*. Each pair of *dohās* is used as a means of foretelling the success or failure of an undertaking. Omens are taken by means of calculation with handfuls of lotus seeds. The following are examples of such omens:

If the *dohās* refer to the wanderings of Rāma and Laksman in search of Sītā, this is an omen of great sorrow and misfortune.

If the reference is to the heroic death of the vulture Jatāyu, the omen is one of salvation after death.

The omen is good if the *dohās* refer to Jatāyu's obsequies performed by Rāma.

The following legend concerns the composition of this poem:

The son of a Rājā of Kāśī went on a hunting expedition and one of his company was killed by a tiger. Believing that it was his son who had been killed, the Rājā summoned an astrologer named Gaṅgā Rām, who lived at Prahlād Ghāt. He asked the astrologer

to predict the exact time at which the prince would return, promising him a great reward if his prophecy proved true, but threatening execution if it were false. Gaṅgā Rām asked for time to make his calculation and confided his troubles to his friend Tulasi Dās, who had called to see him and found him much troubled in mind. Tulasi Dās consoled and reassured him, and sitting down wrote for six hours without stopping, naming his composition *Rāmājñā*. He explained to Gaṅgā Rām the method of divination, and the astrologer, consulting the oracle, found that the prince would return safe and sound on the following evening. The prediction proved true, and Gaṅgā Rām was with difficulty persuaded to accept a lakh of rupees.

The astrologer wished to give the whole sum to Tulasi Dās, but after a whole night spent in argument Tulasi would only accept ten thousand rupees, with which he built ten temples in honour of Hanumān.

Grierson gives the date of the composition of the *Rāmājñā* as Sunday, 4 June 1598 A.D.

8. *Jānakī Mangala*.—This poem and the four that follow are often classed together as the *Pāñca Ratna*. It consists of 480 lines celebrating the marriage of Rāma and Sītā. The journey of Rāma with Viśvāmitra to Mithilā, the breaking of Śiva's bow and the wedding ceremonies are described.

9. *Pārvatī Mangala*.—The marriage song of Śiva and Pārvatī. The poem consists of sixteen stanzas in *chanda* metre. The description of Śiva's procession with his horrifying attendants is much the same as that found in the *Bālakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmacaritamānasa*.

Grierson gives the date of the poem as Thursday, 2 February 1586 A.D.

10. *Vairāgya-sandipinī*.—A didactic treatise, containing three parts in the *dohā*, *sorathā* and *caupā* metres, preceded by an invocation. This short poem is devoted to the nature and greatness of the true saint and a description of the perfect peace (*sānti*) he enjoys.

11. *Rāma-lalā-nahachū*.—Twenty verses of four lines each, celebrating the ceremonial touching of Rāma's nails before his investiture with the sacred thread. The metre is *sohara chanda*.

12. *Baravai Rāmāyaṇa*.—A short history of Rāma in *baravai* metre. There are seven *kāṇḍas* as in the *Rāmacaritamānasa*. The story is often so condensed as to be obscure.

These twelve poems, with the exception of the *Rāma-satasai*, are considered to be authentic by Pt Ram Gulam Dvivedi; most other scholars accept them all. The following nine are also mentioned in the *Śivasimha-saṅgītā* as having been composed by Tulasī Dās: *Sankāṣṭa-mocana*, *Hanumad-bhūka*, *Rāma-salākā*, *Chandāvalī*, *Chappaya Rāmāyaṇa*, *Karakhā Rāmāyaṇa*, *Rolā Rāmāyaṇa*, *Jhulanā Rāmāyaṇa*, *Kundaliyā Rāmāyaṇa*; but these are probably spurious.

### RĀMACARITAMĀNASĀ

Some four centuries before Christ the great Sanskrit epic of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, attributed to the sage Vālmiki, had appeared, telling the story of the birth and childhood of Rāma, the rape of his wife Sītā by Rāvaṇ, the demon king of Lankā, and the conquest of the demons and the recovery of Sītā by Rāma and his army of bears and monkeys. Vālmiki's epic fired the imagination of those Vaisnava devotees who preferred the comparatively pure story of Rāma's exploits to the legends of Kṛiṣṇa, the prince of amorous dalliance; but as the cult of Rāma developed, his worshippers were not content with the ancient poem's representation of their Lord as no more than a great and wonder-working hero (for such passages in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as imply incarnation are almost certainly later interpolations), and a number of Rāma histories were composed with the object of correcting this error and identifying Rāma with Viṣṇu and even with the Absolute Brahman.

Of such poems Tulasī Dās appears to have been specially influenced by the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, a work probably composed in the 14th century A.D., the *Hanumān-nāṭaka* and the *Prasanna-rāghava* of Jayadeva. Pt Ram Naresh Tripathi has listed some hundred passages in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* which echo verses in more than sixty works, among them the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (23 passages) and the *Bhagavadgītā* (7 passages), with the doctrine of which that of this poem is in striking conformity.

Sir George Grierson has pointed out that Tulasī Dās was not a great Sanskritist. This fact may have influenced him in his decision to give up writing Sanskrit verses and devote himself to a medium readily understood by the common people; moreover, he was doubtless moved by a missionary fervour, earnestly desiring to bring as many as possible to salvation by the power of the Name. Be that as it may, he began to write his longest and most famous

poem at Ayodhyā on Tuesday, 30 March 1574 A.D. at the age of forty-two.

It is thought that the first part of the *Bālakāṇḍa* was composed after the second part and the *Ayodhyā* and *Aranyakāṇḍas* had been written, as a reply to the criticisms of the orthodox pandits who regarded with intense disfavour a sacred poem written in any language but Sanskrit. After the composition of the *Aranyakāṇḍa* a quarrel with the Vairāgis of Ayodhyā led him to leave that city and retire to Kāśī, where the remainder of the poem was written, the whole having taken rather more than two-and-a-half years. That is why the invocation at the opening of the *Kiskindhākāṇḍa* contains verses in praise of Kāśī.

The following legendary account is given of the poet's contention with the pandits of Kāśī and their ultimate conversion. When Tulasi Dās had completed his work, he left it one night in the temple of Viśvanāth. In the morning there were found written on the book the words 'Satyam Śivam Sundaram', and the same words were heard in the air by pilgrims who came to worship in the temple. Copies of the book began to circulate and the pandits were dismayed at their popularity. They asked the Śāmkara scholar Śrī Madhusūdan Sarasvatī his opinion of the work and he commended it very highly. Then the pandits made their final effort. One evening they placed in the temple of Viśvanāth a copy of the Veda, beneath it certain śāstras, beneath them a Purāṇa, and below them all a copy of the *Rāmacaritamānasa*. In the morning they found that Tulasi Dās's poem had been moved to the top of the pile. The pandits were at last convinced and begged the poet's pardon.

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* (so called by the poet himself) is in no sense a Hindi translation of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Broadly speaking, it follows the course of his story, and like the ancient epic is divided into seven kāṇḍas bearing the names that Vālmiki had given to his sections. But the whole spirit of Tulasi Dās's poem differs very widely from that of the epic. Vālmiki tells the story of a royal hero, and takes occasion to introduce long, rambling digressions that hold up the progress of the tale to an exasperating extent; moreover, his poem contains no philosophical disquisitions and there are incidents that offend the moral sense. For Tulasi Dās, on the other hand, Rāma, though sharing his deity with his brothers, is held to be one with Viṣṇu and with Brahman, merely playing the part of a mortal man for the benefit of the faithful;

the long digressions are omitted; the characters are apt to indulge in doctrinal discussions (rather to the detriment of artistry) and such events as appear to be inconsistent with the perfection of Rāma's character are softened or omitted altogether.

The following examples will make the points of difference clear. After a very short introduction Vālmīki immediately begins the story with a description of Ayodhyā, Daśarath and his ministers, and the king's desire for a son. But Tulasi Dās presents us with pages of invocation, an apologia for the use of the vernacular, a long account of the relations between Śiva and Satī, and stories of Nārada, Manu Svayambhuva and Pratāpabhbhānu to account for the birth of Rāvan and his family as demons. He adds, too, a prolix apology for the inferiority of his poetry to its high theme and a sarcastic reply to his critics.

Vālmīki makes Rāma's journey to Mithilā with Viśvāmitra the occasion for the lengthy relation of a number of legends—the story of Sagara and his sons, how Bhagiratha brought the Ganges down from heaven, how the gods and giants fought for the nectar after the churning of the ocean. Tulasi Dās omits these legends, only alluding to them from time to time in the course of his poem.

After Janak has received the party at Mithilā, Śatānanda relates at length the story of the rivalry between Viśvāmitra and Vasistha and how the former at last attained to Brahmanical status. There is no suggestion in Tulasi's poem that the two sages are anything but friends. The scene of the breaking of Śiva's bow is not found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*; the bow is brought to Rāma and he breaks it. Further, the scene with Paraśurāma (only explicable if incarnation is not in question) is placed by Vālmīki during the return of the married pairs to Ayodhyā.

In Vālmīki's poem a very long account is given of the death of Kabandha, an incident which Tulasi Dās dismisses in a few verses; and Tulasi's obscure allusion to Dundubhi's bones and the palm-trees is only to be understood by reference to a long story in Vālmīki's *Kiskindhākāṇḍa*.

Tulasi Dās omits to mention the very unfilial remarks attributed by Vālmīki to Lakṣman, angered by his father's folly; Sitā's unworthy suggestion to Lakṣman that he only refuses to go to Rāma's help because he is in love with her himself; and Rāma's justification of his most unknightly action in shooting Bāli like a huntsman—that after all Bāli was only a monkey. Perhaps Tulasi Dās's most significant omission—for the *Lavakuśakāṇḍa* found in some editions

is spurious—is the story of Rāma's conduct in sending Sītā into exile in Vālmiki's hermitage because slanderous tongues in Ayodhyā had impugned her chastity while in Rāvan's power. Tulasi, moreover, takes care to save Sītā's reputation from all possible stain by the device, adopted from the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, of causing the true Sītā to enter the fire before her rape and to return from the fire after the deliverance of the substitute Sītā from Rāvan. In Vālmiki's account Rāma refuses to accept Sītā after her sojourn with Rāvan; she reproaches him and burns herself on the pyre, but is restored by Agni, while Rāma declares that he only acted thus to prove her innocence publicly.

Tulasi Dās's *Uttarakāṇḍa* bears no relation whatever to that of Vālmiki; the conversation between Garuḍ and Kākabhuṣundi is peculiar to the *Rāmacaritamānasa*.

Tulasi Dās wrote the *Rāmacaritamānasa* in the old Baisvārī, or Avadhi, dialect of Hindi. The poem contains many Braj, Bundel-khaṇḍi and Bhojpuri forms, and some sixty Arabic and Persian words. A complete copy of the poem in Tulasi Dās's own writing was once in existence at Rājāpur. It is said that it was stolen about 150 years ago, and that the thief threw it into the Jumna when he was pursued. Only the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* was recovered in a legible state. Grierson mentions another original copy at Malihabad.

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* brought a simple and pure gospel—good news of salvation—in homely and idiomatic vernacular straight home to the heart of the average Hindu, oppressed by the prospect of perpetual rebirth and depressed by the impossibility of the unlearned ever grasping the knowledge of the Absolute demanded by the metaphysicians of the *advaita* school. The poem not only presented an ideal of perfect chivalry, tenderness and love, but promised final liberation in this evil age to the humblest outcaste if only he would put his trust, with love and adoration, in the Name of Rāma, the Blessed Lord.

No wonder, then, that for the past three hundred years the *Rāmacaritamānasa* has been the most popular scripture among the common people of North India. The beauty of Rāma's person and character, the wonder of his exploits and the high moral principles that underlie his every thought and word and deed have been an inspiration and an example to generations of pious Hindus. The loyalty of Laksman, so human and impulsive, the unselfish devotion of Bharat, who wished to avoid even the appearance of evil, and the utter faithfulness of Sītā to her lord in good and evil

circumstance alike—all these have won the hearts of men and women who see in them what they themselves ought and long to be.

A proof of the universal popularity of the poem is the annual performance of the *Rām Lilā* (said to have been instituted by Tulasi Dās himself at Kāśī) in every town and village in North India. The *Rām Lilā* played in the grounds of the Mahārāja of Banaras at Rāmnagar is an unforgettable scene. The performance goes on for about three weeks and is shown on a vast expanse of open ground. As scene succeeds to scene, the actors move from one place to another—from Ayodhyā to Mithilā, Citrakūṭa or Laṅkā—while the spectators troop after them on elephant or foot. The actors play their part in silence, but a choir of devotees chant antiphonally the words of the poem in their soft, melodious, jingling Avadhi Hindi. For them, as for the majority of the common people, the play is no mere spectacle but a deeply religious service. The final scene—the *Bharat Milāp*, or the reunion of Rāma and Bharat in the city of Ayodhyā—takes place in the heart of Banaras itself, and the moment of embrace is greeted with rapturous applause.

From the oriental point of view the poem is a work of the highest artistic merit. While Western taste finds much to admire in the characterization and many passages of exceptional beauty, it also finds much to criticize. The poet is at his best when the story moves rapidly along; but when he becomes a preacher and allows his characters to indulge in lengthy metaphysical and moral discourses, and when pages are filled with sentimental descriptions of tender greetings and farewells, the Western reader grows impatient. The *Laṅkākāṇḍa* is too full of grim marvels; and although, as Mr Growse has pointed out, Tulasi Dās in passages of rare beauty displays an observant knowledge of nature unusual in the poets of his age, one wearies of the perpetual reference to the conventional and mythical habits of the partridge, the swan, the ruddy goose, the serpent, the lotus and the lily. One would wish, too, that the persons of the poem were less often bathed in tears and less often resembled the jack-fruit (to adopt the poet's own simile) in the ecstatic erection of every hair on the body. But it must be remembered that it is these very passages that most appeal as beautiful to the Eastern devotee, and oriental art should not be judged by the standards of the West.

## THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Tulasi Dās was, as we have seen, adopted and taught by Narahari, sixth in spiritual descent from Rāmānanda, who was originally a follower of the southern Vaiṣṇava school of Rāmānuja (born in the first quarter of the 11th century A.D.). Rāmānanda, a Kānya-kubja Brāhmaṇ of Prayāg (traditionally 1299–1410 A.D.) quarrelled with the followers of Rāmānuja's Śrī Sampradaya, who were very strict in their ceremonial observances, and was expelled from their fellowship for what they held to be acts of impurity. He founded the Rāmāvat sect, called *avadhūta* as having 'shaken off the bonds of narrow-mindedness', a more liberal and less arrogant sect, preaching love to God and duty to one's neighbour and a less restricted brotherhood of man.

Rāmānuja, whose *mantra* honoured the name of Nārāyaṇa, worshipped all the Vaiṣṇava *avatāras*, while Rāmānanda devoted himself to Rāma alone and his consort Sītā.

For a study of Tulasi Dās's theology and philosophy as revealed in the *Rāmacaritamānasā* it will therefore be convenient to summarize the beliefs of Rāmānuja and to note how far Tulasi Dās subscribed to his doctrine and how far he pursued an independent path.

## RĀMĀNUJA

Like most Hindu philosophers, Rāmānuja wrote commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras and the *Bhagavadgītā*, as well as the *Vedāntasāra* and other Vedānta works. He was much influenced by the Viṣṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas and endeavoured in his Vedantic writings to reconcile the doctrines of the *prasthānatraya*, or canon of three scriptures—the Upaniṣads, Vedānta Sūtras and the *Bhagavadgītā*—with those of the Vaiṣṇava saints. More particularly was he concerned to refute the pure intellectual monism (*advaita*) of Śaṅkara and the Mīmāṁsaka reliance on ritualism, with its emphasis on caste and the functions of the priest. While upholding caste distinctions and restrictions for social purposes, he held out the hope of final liberation to all castes, high and low, and to the ignorant as well as the learned, not through the realization of the oneness of the Self with the Absolute nor by virtue of ritual observances (though both knowledge and works had their part to play in the scheme of salvation), but by means of *bhakti*—faith or devotion, directed towards one of the Vaiṣṇava *avatāras*, whose grace alone could save.

Unlike Śaṅkara, but in common with all the theistic systems, he regarded God (Brahman, Īśvara, Viṣṇu) as personal and the individual soul and unconscious matter as possessing a real, though dependent, existence. He rejected *māyā* as taught by the *advaitins* and held that the individual found his true being, not in absorption into the Supreme, a 'bloodless Absolute, dark with the excess of light', but in fellowship with the personal God. Rāmānuja's system is called *vīśiṣṭādvaita*, that is, *advaita* with a qualification.

God is personal. This is proved by logic and religious experience. Śaṅkara's impersonal Absolute (*nirguna brahman*) is a void, unknowable by perception, inference or scripture. God contains within himself the qualities of being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*), and bliss (*ānanda*). He is perfect personality, dependent on nothing external, possessing knowledge, power and love. He is the Lord of *karma*, distributing pains and pleasures, not arbitrarily but in strict accordance with the actions of the individual soul. Rāmānuja identifies the Supreme Spirit with Viṣṇu.

The Individual Soul, though dependent for its existence on God, is yet real and free to make its own choices. It is distinct from the body, the senses, vital breath and intelligence. Though minute, it is able to feel pleasure and pain all over the body. It is possessed of extensive cognition, but its bondage to the body impedes the vision of the eternal and prevents it from realizing its kinship with God.

The Soul suffers perpetual rebirth, but always maintains its identity, nor is it destroyed at the periodical dissolution of the world. It is said to be a part (*amṛta*) of God, not, of course, a part subtracted from a whole, but a qualified form or mode of the Supreme Spirit.

The freedom of the Soul to act according to its own choice is a reality and yet does not involve a limitation of the absolute power of God; nor does the law of *karma*, of which God is the Lord and in accordance with which he dispenses punishments and rewards, or rather, inevitable consequences. Rāmānuja, like all who try to reconcile human freedom with the absolute sovereignty of God, becomes involved in logical difficulties, but refuses to abandon his doctrine of the Soul's self-determination.

Individual Souls are of three kinds; (a) eternal (*nitya*) who dwell in Viṣṇu's heaven, Vaikunṭha, blissfully free from *karma* and *prakṛiti*; (b) the freed (*mukta*) or those who achieve liberation through their wisdom, virtue or devotion; and (c) the bound

(*baddha*) who wander through numberless rebirths owing to their ignorance and selfishness. The third class contains celestial, human, animal and stationary souls. Souls are all of one kind, and their apparent distinctions of condition and caste are due to their association with different kinds of bodies.

Unconscious Matter is also a reality, and with the conscious soul forms the body of *Iśvara*. Rāmānuja adopts the Sāṅkhyan view of *prakṛiti* with the three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*; but unlike the Sāṅkhya holds that the development of *prakṛiti* to the manifest is caused and controlled by *Iśvara*. In addition to *prakṛiti* there are two other unconscious substances, time (*kāla*) and the purely *sāttvika* stuff of the body of God as transcendent (*suddhatattva*). These three entities are controlled by the will of God and are more completely dependent on him than the souls, which are free to choose.

A word should be added in explanation of the Sāṅkhyan theory of *prakṛiti*. The Sāṅkhya system attributes the evolution of *prakṛiti* from the unmanifest to the manifest to activity on the part of the three *gunas* of which it is composed; the *viśiṣṭādvaita*, as we have seen, to the will of God. The word *guna* means the 'strand' of a rope, and the technical term is excellently conceived to remind us that the *gunas* are not qualities (an ordinary sense of the word), but constituents, or elements, of *prakṛiti*, as three strands may be the substance of a rope. The three *gunas* are called *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva*, the white strand, is that in nature which is pure, light-giving, true and good; *rajas*, the red strand, is that which causes activity and restlessness and passion, the strand of energy; *tamas*, the black strand, is all that is heavy and dark and indifferent and inert. In the unmanifest they lie in equilibrium; set moving, they evolve *buddhi*, *ahamkāra* and the rest; and it is their interaction and relative proportion in things that cause the manifold differences of character and function in the world.

Souls and Matter, which are modes (*prakāras*) of God, exist from all eternity, alternating between a subtle state when matter is unevolved (*avyakta*) and intelligence is contracted (*samkucita*) and the state of God-willed creation when matter becomes gross and intelligence expanded. Then souls enter into connexion with material bodies according to the degree of merit or demerit that they have acquired in former lives. For God, the periodic creation of the world is said to be sport (*kīlā*), a peculiar Hindu doctrine

which emphasizes the absolute freedom and independence of the Creator.

Śaṅkara held a thoroughgoing belief in the doctrine of *māyā* or illusion. He taught that the multiple distinctions of the phenomenal world are utterly unreal. Against this doctrine Rāmānuja raised a vigorous protest, basing his arguments partly on logic and partly on the testimony of scripture.

When a soul is bound in the body, it not only suffers pains or enjoys pleasures in accordance with the law of *karma* but becomes subject to *avidyā*, or ignorance, which leads it to identify itself with the body and to be unaware that it is in reality a mode of God. *Karma* and the grace of God help towards a conviction of sin and the attainment of *vidyā*, or the intuition that God is the fundamental self of all.

*Bhakti* is the means to salvation, inspired by the grace (*prasāda*) of God. But *bhakti* is not merely an emotional state; it includes the training of will and intellect. Thus knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*karma*) have their part to play, though not the essential parts attributed to them respectively by the Śaṅkara and Mīmāṃsaka schools. They form, rather, a kind of propaedeutic to *bhakti*. *Jñāna*, which stands for meditation and profound contemplation and concentration on the truth that the soul is a mode of God, leads on to *bhakti*, but can itself only be attained when bad *karma* is destroyed by work done in a completely disinterested spirit. Work dedicated to God helps the soul to see the truth of things, and the vision of the truth clears the way for *bhakti* and leads to utter surrender of the self to God (*prapatti*).

Liberation (*mokṣa*) is not, for Rāmānuja, the disappearance of a self absorbed into the Absolute, but its release from the bonds of the body and the attainment of a state in which the unhampered soul can perpetually enjoy the presence of the Beloved. The released soul attains to the nature of God, but not to identity with him (*brahmaṇo bhāvah na tu svarūpaikyam*). Freed from *karma* and *avidyā*, it is omniscient and attains to all the perfections of the Supreme with the exception of power over creation and the quality of omnipresence.

Rāmānuja's picture of heaven corresponds very nearly to the Paradise of popular imagination.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, Chap. ix, on the Theism of Rāmānuja should be consulted for a full exposition of this subject. The above summary is largely derived from his work.

## TULASI DĀS

It will be evident to the student of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* that the theology and philosophy of Tulasi Dās are very much in accord with those of Rāmānuja; but it will equally be evident that in his view of the Absolute and his theory of *māyā* he leaned rather to *advaita* tenets, while his *bhakti* was more emotional and less austere than that of the Śri Sampradaya, influenced as it was by an even greater dependence on the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas. These statements will be clarified by the following analysis of the poet's teachings.

1. *Brahman*.—There is nothing in Tulasi Dās's description of the Absolute that is necessarily inconsistent with the views of Rāmānuja, though his emphasis on the fact that Brahman is both *nirguna* and *saguṇa* (B.C. 23), his constant reference to the negative description of the Absolute pronounced by Yājñavalkya in the Upanisads—*neti neti*, not thus, not thus—(twelve times repeated, e.g. B.D. 12; A.C. 93; Ar. C. 25; K.Ch. 1; L.D. 117; U.C. 119), and the ascription to Rāma as supreme of the usual negative epithets (e.g. *anīha*, *arūpa*, *anāma*, *anādi*, *avināśi*, *avikārti*, *akala*, *abhedā*) perhaps suggest a more definite leaning to the *advaita* view than Rāmānuja would have approved. But it is the poet's view of *māyā*, so largely admitted in the *advaita* sense, that casts a reflection of absolute monism on his conception of Brahman. His doctrine of *māyā* will be explained in a later section.

2. *The Trimūrti*.—Tulasi Dās accepts the traditional threefold manifestation of the Supreme—Brahmā, the creator and disposer, Viṣṇu, the preserver, and Śiva, the destroyer. Taken separately, they appear and act consistently with their several functions. Brahmā is responsible for all creation (B.C. 6); he is regarded as the helper and spokesman of the gods (B.C. 82ff.; B.Ch. 19ff.), though sometimes feeble and dependent on Viṣṇu (B.Ch. 19ff.). He is the supreme dispenser of the fruit of good and evil works (A.C. 282), and is frequently blamed by mortals when things go wrong (e.g. A.C. 47; A.C. 49). He draws the lines of destiny upon the forehead (B.C. 32; B.D. 68; B.C. 97; L.C. 29).

Śiva plays an important part in the story. He relates the *Rāmacaritamānasa* to Pārvati, and the story of his abandonment of Sati, his destruction of Kāmadeva and his marriage with Pārvati is told at great length in the *Bälakāṇḍa*. He appears as the perfect ascetic and his grim nature as the Destroyer is typified by the fantastic attendants and gruesome trappings which frighten the

children at his wedding. He sometimes receives the most exalted titles, such as one would expect the Vaisnava poet to reserve for Viṣṇu alone. Thus he is called Bhagavān (B.C. 46), Cidānanda (B.C. 75), and, in the words of Satī, Jagadātmā and Jagatajanaka (B.C. 64. See also the hymn of praise addressed to Śiva by Kākabhuśundi's *guru* at U.Ch. 13). This may be due partly to Tulasi Dās's desire to effect a reconciliation between the Śaiva and Vaisnava rivals, and partly to the ineradicably kathenotheistic tendency that pervades Hindu worship. At any rate, as will later be made clear, his teaching in the main makes Śiva entirely subservient to Viṣṇu.

Viṣṇu, or Hari, of whom Rāma is the incarnation, is occasionally mentioned as though he were a single member of the *trimūrti* and even separate from the Rāma *avatāra*. He is said to witness Rāma's wedding with delight (B.C. 314); in a curious passage, where Manu prays the Lord (Hari) to reveal himself as Rāma, he speaks of Brahmā, Hari and Hara as worshipping the dust of the Lord's feet (B.C. 146). Rāma is said to make the three members of the *trimūrti* dance like puppets (A.C. 127; cf. A.C. 254). It is, according to Hanumān, Rāma by whose power Brahmā creates, Hari preserves and Śiva destroys (S.C. 21); and in U.C. 90 Rāma is said to create with the skill of a myriad Brahmās, to preserve like a myriad Viṣṇus and destroy like a myriad Rudras. In such passages Rāma is regarded as the manifestation of Brahman; the following passage makes this clear; 'Ever in their hearts was a yearning to see with their own eyes the Supreme Lord, impersonal, indivisible, without end or beginning, whom mystics contemplate, whom the Veda defines as "Not thus, not thus", pure delight, without attribute or equal, from a part of whom are born many a Śainibhu, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the Blessed Lord' (B.C. 144).

But in the main Tulasi Dās, like all Vaisnava theists, held Viṣṇu to be infinitely superior to Brahmā and Śiva, one with the Absolute and performing all the functions normally assigned to the other two members of the triad. As the chief *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, Rāma is credited with all his powers, and the hymns of praise addressed to Rāma observe no distinction between the two.

Thus Rāma is said some thirty times in the course of the poem to be the object of Brahmā and Śiva's worship (e.g. K.D. 25; S.Śl.; L.C. 22; U.Ch. 5); Śiva acknowledges Rāma to be his master (B.C. 77; B.D. 116); he and Brahmā are said to crave his grace (Ar.C. 5), and both address hymns of praise to Rāma as their Lord

(B.Ch. 20; U.Ch. 6). Brahmā is said to be subject, as are all the gods and demons, to Rāma's *māyā* (B.Śl.) and Śiva, who is constantly repeating Rāma's name (B.C. 10; B.C. 46; B.C. 75; B.C. 108), teaches the utterance of that name to votaries at Kāśī, whereby they attain to liberation (B.C. 19; B.C. 46; B.C. 119).

Tulasi Dās was, as we have seen, anxious to reconcile Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava rivalries and lost no opportunity of insisting on the mutual friendship and respect of Śiva and Rāma. Thus, at L.C. 2ff. Rāma sets up a *linga* at Rāmeśvara and ceremonially establishes the worship of Śiva. He promises liberation to all who make pilgrimage to the spot, saying, 'None is so dear to me as Śiva. The man who is opposed to Śiva and is called my worshipper can never dream of winning to me. The enemy of Śāṅkara who aims at faith in me is fit for hell, a fool of little understanding'. The same lesson is taught to Kākabhuśundi by his *guru* (U.C. 102ff.) and references are made to Rāma's love for Śiva at B.C. 104; B.C. 138; A.C. 103; A.C. 106; Ar.Śl.; L.D. 119; U.D. 45. But the ill-treatment meted out to the poet by the Śaivas at Kāśī proves that this attempt at an eirenicon failed to satisfy them; for them, Śiva must be supreme and Viṣṇu his servant.

3. *Celestial Beings*.—In addition to the members of the *trimūrti* Tulasi Dās recognizes the existence of the gods of Hindu mythology; but not only are their functions very limited, their conduct is extremely selfish and mean, and the poet seems to take delight in abusing the whole host of lesser deities and Indra in particular. The story of the humiliation of Nārada reveals Indra as a selfish despot, afraid of the power of the seer's austerities, and Tulasi Dās compares him to a crafty crow (B.C. 125) and a foolish and shameless dog (B.D. 125; cf. A.C. 302). The gods are anxious that Rāma should fulfil the purpose of his incarnation and slay Rāvan, but the only device they can think of to gain their end is the dispatch of Sarasvatī to pervert the mind of Mantharā and so stir up the jealousy of queen Kaikeyī. 'Base are the thoughts of the gods! High is their dwelling but low their deeds!' says Sarasvatī (A.C. 12). When Bharat goes to meet Rāma in the forest, the gods are in constant anxiety lest he should persuade the Lord to return to Ayodhyā, an anxiety which betrays their limited vision and their lack of confidence in the promise that Hari has made them. Sarasvatī refuses to interfere (A.C. 295). Finally, Indra sends out his *māyā* to discourage Bharat's company, and the poet remarks, 'The ways of Indra are like those of a crow, deceitful, scoundrelly, putting no

faith in any'; and when Rāma saw what Indra had done, he laughed and compared the king of heaven to an adolescent and a dog (A.C. 302).

Agni is treated with respect. He is present as witness at the birth of Daśarath's four sons (B.C. 188), the pact between Rāma and Sugrīva (K.D. 4) and the return of the true Sītā from the fire (L.Ch. 33).

Sarasvatī, the *sakti* or consort of Brahmā, is frequently mentioned as the goddess of speech, who comes to the aid of poets (B.C. 11), acts as a go-between when the gods wish to influence mortals (A.C. 11ff.; A.C. 295), and shares with Śeṣanāga and others the inability to describe indescribable scenes (e.g. B.C. 193; B.D. 289). But all her actions are inspired by Rāma, who is able to make her dance like a puppet.

The story of Pārvatī is closely linked with that of Śiva. She doubts the deity of Rāma and pays the penalty; but in general she is treated with great respect and even shares with Sītā the title of Mother of the world. But the highest honours are reserved for Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu; Sītā is her incarnation.<sup>1</sup>

We have seen with what scant reverence Tulasi Dās regards Indra and the company of lesser gods. Indra is represented as a selfish voluptuary, revelling in the luxuries of Amarāvatī, while the main function of the divine host is to race about in their celestial chariots, witnessing important ceremonies, beating kettle-drums and raining down showers of blossoms to mark their approval when they are pleased with the trend of events on earth. Other celestial beings—Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Apsarās—join in song and dance on auspicious occasions.

Although the scene of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* is set in the Tretāyuga, there appears to be plenty of evil in the universe. Brāhmaṇas curse and demons are born to work havoc among gods and men. It is, however, a curious feature of Tulasi Dās's demonology that almost all the principal demons, male and female, are conscious of Rāma's supremacy and anxious to persuade Rāvan not to make trial of his strength. Some, indeed, as Vibhiṣan and Trijatā, are true votaries; and all that fall to Rāma's arrows are thereby considered worthy of entry to his realm. It is suggested in the *Bälakānda* that one reason for Rāma's incarnation was his

<sup>1</sup> For the nature and functions of these deities, and of others, as Gapeśa and Kuvera, see Appendix under their names.

desire to save those born as demons from the consequences of their original folly.

4. *Rāma*.—Little further need be said about the personality of Rāma. He is identified with Viṣṇu and therefore with Brahman. He is the Absolute made personal (e.g. B.C. 108; B.C. 116; B.Ch. 28; A.C. 93; Ar.Ch. 8; K.C. 26; S.C. 39; L.C. 109; U.D. 47); the first cause of all things (B.Śl.; B.D. 208); the sole means of liberation (B.Śl. and *passim*); the Lord of *māyā*, to which all creation is subject. He becomes incarnate aeon after aeon (U.C. 109; and see § 6 *infra*). Like Kṛiṣṇa in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he reveals himself as the Universal, to his mother in his infancy (B.D. 201ff.) and to Kākabhuṣundi as a child (U.C. 78ff.). His love for Sītā is but a renewal of the love that Viṣṇu bore Lakṣmī (B.C. 226; A.C. 139).

Tulasi is anxious to explain that Rāma's humanity is not real but merely a conscious exhibition of divine *līlā*. As a child he finds amusement in the display of his Universal Form. When the poet has occasion to say that Rāma felt weary, he hastens to add that he is merely using a conventional phrase (A.C. 87). When Lakṣman is wounded and Rāma grieves over his brother, Tulasi Dās implies that he is but playing the part of a mortal man (L.C. 61). When in the battle of Laṅkā he allows himself to be entangled in the magic serpents' coils, the poet compares him to a showman practising illusions (L.C. 73ff.); and Kākabhuṣundi compares him to an actor who plays on the stage in various disguises but himself remains what he really is all the time (U.D. 72ff.). So throughout the poem the docetic theory of incarnation is either expressed or implied.

All oriental religions, not excepting Christianity, emphasize the sovereign power of the Name. Tulasi Dās goes to exaggerated and somewhat absurd lengths in glorifying the Name of Rāma. In the introduction to his poem he does homage to the Name RĀMA, and asserts that the Name is greater than the Absolute and than Rāma himself; for the form of the Absolute is unknowable until revealed by the Name, and although Rāma in the days of his flesh performed marvellous exploits and saved Ahalyā, the Śavari, Sugrīva, Vibhiṣan and a number of others who put their trust in him, the utterance of the Name has saved millions of votaries and will continue to save them to the end of time. 'Therefore,' he says, 'the Name is greater than both the Absolute and Rāma and blesses even those that bless' (B.C. 19–28).

Moreover, so mighty is the power of the Name that liberation can be won by the unthinking, mechanical utterance of it. 'Whether one repeats the Name in love or hatred, wrath or idle mood, it brings felicity in every quarter' (B.C. 28). Again, 'When men even involuntarily utter his Name, the sins they have committed in all their lives are burnt up' (B.C. 119). The same beneficial effect is produced in one who merely utters the Name in the act of yawning (A.C. 194; A.D. 311). A single utterance is enough to save (A.C. 217).

5. *Māyā*.—Opinions differ on the subject of Tulasi Dās's theory of *māyā*, or illusion. Some hold that it is not inconsistent with Rāmānuja's protest against the thoroughgoing *advaita māyāvāda* of Śaṅkara, while others interpret the relevant passages (of which there are more than seventy) in a manner that suggests that the poet was influenced by the *advaita* Vedāntins of Kāśī. The latter is the more probable view.

Rāma is the Lord of *māyā* (*māyāddhanī*, B.Ch. 2; *māyādhīśa*, B.C. 117, and see the whole passage; *māyānātha*, Ar.Ch. 6; *māyāpati*, B.S. 140). All creation is subject to his *māyā* (B.Śl.; B.S. 140; L.D. 51; U.Ch. 5; U.C. 57; U.C. 76), which is absolutely under his control (B.C. 198; B.C. 222), but from which he himself is perfectly free (B.Ch. 20; B.D. 192; B.D. 199). From this *māyā* Rāma is able to free his votaries, as Kākabhuśundi (U.D. 85). 'O Umā,' says Śiva (Ar.C. 37), 'Rāma is Lord of all creation; wrath, lust, greed, pride and delusion are all exterminated by the mercy of Rāma. That man is not deceived by this stage-trickery to whom the great Illusionist grants his grace. The worship of Hari is reality; the whole world is but a dream.'

It is by the agency of his *māyā* that Rāma creates the universe (B.C. 222; B.Ch. 21; S.C. 21; S.C. 59). *Māyā* is identified with Sītā, regarded as Rāma's *sakti* (A.Ch. 5). When Rāma reveals himself to Manu, 'on his left there matched his beauty the Primal Energy (*ādi-sakti*), perfect loveliness, cause of the world, she from a part of whom are born innumerable Lakṣmis, Umās and Brahmanis; she by the play of whose eyebrows the world comes into being stood on Rāma's left, Sītā herself' (B.C. 148; see also B.C. 152). Twice, as Rāma and Lakṣman walk through the forest with Sītā between them, the three travellers are compared to the Absolute, *Māyā* and the Individual Soul (A.C. 123; Ar.C. 6).

The word *māyā* is used for any particular illusion which Viṣṇu or Rāma practises to deceive a mortal or semi-mortal (e.g. the

illusion of the phantom city to delude Nārada, B.C. 129; B.C. 132; Ar.C. 41); his *māyā* caused Sati to lie to Śiva (B.C. 56). It is also used in the sense of 'magic' or 'sorcery' to describe the various illusory tricks practised by the demons in the battle of Lankā. Rāma makes no use of his magic power in that battle, contenting himself with the dispersal of the enemy's magic, but he employs *māyā* to bring to an end his conflict with Khara, Dūṣana and Triśirā in the forest (Ar. Ch. 6ff.).

The three *loci classici* for the study of Tulasi Dās's doctrine of *māyā* are to be found at Ar.C. 14ff.; U.D. 70ff.; and U.C. 110ff. Careful consideration of the views he expresses should leave little doubt that he tends rather to the Śaṅkara conception than to the belief in a real world taught by Rāmānuja.

Ar.C. 14ff.—Lakṣman has asked Rāma to explain the difference between God (*īśvara*) and the individual soul (*jīva*) and the meaning of illusion (*māyā*). All individual souls, says Rāma, are controlled by the illusory idea that they are separate entities; the senses, too, and all their objects are illusion. There are two kinds of *māyā*; one kind is good and is *vidyā*, namely that *māyā* which is absolutely controlled by the Lord, who sends it forth as the cause of creation; the other is *avidyā*, that *māyā* which influences the soul and causes it to suffer rebirth and pain. He, then, who sends forth illusion is God, while that which fails to recognize God or illusion or its own true nature (or, according to another possible interpretation, that which does not know itself to be the master of illusion, i.e., identical with God) is the individual soul.

U.D. 70ff.—Kākabhuśundi is teaching Garuḍ. Who is there in the world, he asks, whom *māyā* has not influenced? He lists a number of human failings—greed, pride, lust, envy and the like—as captains and soldiers in her army. *Māyā* is the handmaid of Rāma and is absolutely under his control; but he himself is not subject to her power. When Rāma plays a part, the wicked imagine him to be governed by *māyā*; but this is no more true than the errors of a man with defective vision or no sense of direction, or the mistake of a child when he spins round and thinks it is the world that is spinning. Hari, he concludes, has nothing whatever to do with ignorance (*ajñāna*), the effect of illusion.

U.C. 110ff.—Garuḍ asks Kākabhuśundi to explain the difference between knowledge and faith. In the course of his answer (which will be further considered in § 6) the crow elaborates a quaint conceit. Wisdom (*jñāna*), detachment (*virūga*), austerity (*yoga*)

and scientific knowledge (*vijñāna*) are all masculine nouns, naturally stronger than and superior to illusion (*māyā*), which is feminine. Yet even the wise can fall victims to a woman's wiles; therefore, in order to escape the toils of *māyā*, these masculine practices seek the favour of feminine faith (*bhakti*), who, being a woman and more beloved by Rāma, is not ensnared by *māyā* and is able to deliver those who seek her.

The crow then proceeds to state that the soul of the creature (*jīva*) is in reality a part of God (*īsvara-amśa*), but because it is subject to *māyā*, it fancies itself to be entangled with matter, though in fact the union is unreal. Though it tries to free itself by following the way of knowledge, the task is wellnigh impossible, for *māyā* puts every kind of obstacle in its path. Faith alone can win the victory.

6. *Bhakti*.—The way of *bhakti* is the approach of love to a personal Lord. Its foundation is faith (*śraddhā*) and that which both inspires and responds to it is Rāma's grace (*prasāda*; U.C. 83). This being so, it is evident that *bhakti* can only manifest itself in man when God is conceived of as personal, a Saviour worthy of trust and ready to be gracious. The first definite doctrine of *bhakti*, directed towards Kṛiṣṇa, is to be found in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and it will repay the student to compare the teaching in that poem with the doctrine of the *Rāmacaritamānasa*. The *Rāma-bhakti* of Tulasī Dās is less restrained than the *Kṛiṣṇa-bhakti* of the *Gītā*; more passionate, too, than the somewhat sober, intellectual *bhakti* of Rāmānuja; the ecstasy of Sutikṣṇa (Ar.C. 9ff.) illustrates this point. But, generally speaking, the *bhakti* advocated by Tulasī Dās is not divorced from the duties of practical life and the dictates of common sense. Devotion is an essential element in a religious attitude where knowledge and work play their due part. Indeed, Tulasī Dās goes further than Rāmānuja in admitting the way of knowledge as a means to liberation, though he rules it out as too difficult a path for the ordinary man to tread. The way of faith is the easiest way, the way prescribed in this evil age.

'From the performance of duty,' says Rāma to Lakṣman, 'springs detachment; from austere practices, knowledge; knowledge brings release; but, brother, it is faith in me that quickly melts my heart and brings bliss to the faithful' (Ar.C. 15). He then proceeds to explain how faith may be won, naming such practices as devotion to the service of Brāhmans and strict attention to one's own special

duty, meditation, self-dedication and the like. 'In the hearts of those who in thought and word and deed make me their place of refuge and worship me without desire I dwell eternally' (cf. Vālmiki's advice: A.C. 128ff.). 'Those who know thee,' says Sutikṣṇa, 'as personal, impersonal and dwelling in the hearts of all may know thee so; but in my heart may that Rāma who is the Lord of Kosala make his abode!' (Ar.C. 10). 'Though you are the Absolute, indivisible and eternal, comprehensible only by intuition,' says Agastya, 'though I know and speak of that form of yours, yet I constantly turn back therefrom and spend my love on the Absolute made man' (Ar.C. 12). 'Some there are who contemplate the impersonal Absolute,' says Indra, 'but I delight in the king of Kosala, the Lord Rāma himself in personal form' (L.Ch. 35). 'Let those who contemplate the Absolute,' cry the Vedas, 'speak of It and know It; we, O Lord, hymn unceasingly thy glory as personal' (U.Ch. 5).

These and other passages imply that there are some who find satisfaction in the way of knowledge and the contemplation of the impersonal, but that the true *bhakta* turns from so soulless a worship of the abstract to devote himself in utter self-abandonment to the personal Lord. So Kākabhuśundi, who refused to listen to the *advaita* teaching of Lomaśa the sage and clung to the worship of the personal (U.D. 110ff.) instructs Garuḍ at length on the difference between knowledge and faith (U.C. 110ff.). 'There is no real difference,' he says, 'between the ways of faith and knowledge, for both put an end to the troubles caused by the cycle of mortality'; but he draws such a picture of the inescapable obstacles that stand in the way of the seeker after knowledge that one can only assent to his conclusion: 'The way of knowledge is the edge of a sword; he who treads this path and stumbles not does attain to the high estate of final liberation, but it is very hard to reach. By the worship of Rāma that release comes unsought, spontaneously.' (Cf. Rāma's teaching to the Śavari at Ar.C. 33ff. and to his friends at U.C. 43ff.)

Of the many relationships possible between Rāma and his *bhakta* Tulasī Dās lays special emphasis on the master-servant bond (*sevaka-sevya-bhāva*: U.D. 119). As the loyal servant is willing to give up everything in order to serve his master with true devotion, so the *bhakta* is ready to abandon caste and brotherhood, wealth and position, that he may treasure in his soul Rāma alone, the servant of his master in thought and word and deed (A.C. 131).

Tulasi Dās is fond of exalting the 'saints', the true votaries of the Lord. Rāma describes the characteristics of the good man at Bharat's request (U.C. 35ff.) in a passage which contains the famous simile of the axe and the sandal-tree: 'The axe cuts down the tree, but the sandal sheds its natural fragrance on the axe.' (See also S.C. 48ff. and S.C. 41). Kākabhuśundi describes the saint to Garuḍ (U.C. 116) and Tulasi Dās speaks of the effects of good and bad company (B.C. 2-D. 7; see also S.D. 4 and U.D. 125). Though *bhakti* is in one sense a personal and individual matter, it is again and again pointed out that it cannot be attained unless one seeks the fellowship of the saints. *Bhaktas* form a kind of ecclesia, and much time must be spent in hearing and reciting the stories of Rāma's incarnations. Rāma thus addresses the company of his friends: 'Faith is free and altogether blissful; yet cannot men win it without the fellowship of the saints' (U.C. 43). Again, when Śiva sends Garuḍ to Kākabhuśundi, he says, 'Doubt can only be completely resolved when the fellowship of the saints has been enjoyed for a considerable time; in their company the glorious story of Hari must be heard' (U.C. 59). 'The reward of all endeavour,' says the crow, 'is firm faith in Hari, and that no man has found without the help of the saints' (U.C. 115; see also B.D. 38; B.C. 39.).

An important passage, in which Kākabhuśundi describes the universal wickedness of the Kaliyuga, is found in the *Uttarakōṇḍa* (U.D. 96–102). In the Kaliyuga, he says, only *bhakti* is of avail for liberation. He expounds this doctrine in the Tretāyuga, but as he has already lived for twenty-seven *kalpas*, or aeons, he has had plenty of experience of recurring *yugas*. 'In the Kṛita-yuga,' he says, 'everyone is an ascetic and mystic; men pass across the sea of birth and death by meditating on Hari. In the Tretāyuga men perform various sacrifices and escape rebirth by offering their works to the Lord. In the Dvāparayuga the ritual worship of Rāma is the only means to liberation. But in the Kaliyuga by merely singing the praise of Hari's virtues men sound the bottom of the ocean of mortality. In the Kaliyuga there is no need of austerity, sacrifice or knowledge; the singing of Rāma's praise is the only sure means of salvation' (cf. B.C. 27).

Tulasi Dās accepts the orthodox belief in the cycle of *kalpas*, or aeons, and *yugas*, or ages. The four *yugas* are *kṛita* (or *satya*), *tretā*, *dvāpara* and *kali*. These names are derived from the numbers on the dice in descending order of auspiciousness. Each *yuga* is

preceded by a 'twilight' (*sandhyā*) and followed by a 'portion of twilight' (*sandhyāmēa*); the first consists of 4,000 divine years, with 400 for each of its twilights; the second of 3,000 with 300 for each twilight; the third of 2,000 with 200 for each twilight; and the fourth of 1,000 with 100 for each twilight. But since one divine year equals 360 mortal years, the four *yugas* last severally 1,728,000, 1,296,000, 864,000 and 432,000 years. The complete cycle of 4,320,000 years constitutes a *mahāyuga*. At the end of every 1,000 *mahāyugas* (a *kalpa* or Day of Brahmā) the universe is dissolved (*pralīna*) and after a Night of Brahmā of the same length is recreated.

The regularly descending numbers in the series of *yugas* represent a corresponding physical and moral deterioration in those who live during each age. We are now living in the Kaliyuga, which began in 3101 or 3102 B.C.

As *kalpa* succeeds to *kalpa*, the incarnations of Viṣṇu repeat themselves. This explains the many 'causes of incarnation' mentioned in the *Bälakāṇḍa* and the statement of the long-lived Kākabhuṣundi: 'Whenever Rāma assumes a human form and plays his many parts for his worshippers' sake, I go to the city of Avadh and take delight in watching his childish pranks' (U.C. 73. Cf. U.C. 109).

7. *Mokṣa*.—There are four grades of *mokṣa*, or final emancipation from the cycle of birth and death, namely, (a) *sāyujya*, or complete absorption into the Absolute; (b) *sārūpya*, or resemblance to, or conformity with the deity; (c) *sāmīpya*, or proximity to, or contact with the deity; and (d) *sālokya*, or residence in the same sphere as the deity. Rāmānuja rules out the first grade as inconsistent with his doctrine of *bheda-bhakti*, or devotion to an object essentially and eternally distinct from the votary, and teaches that the highest bliss is to be enjoyed in the eternal presence of the object of adoration. Tulasī Dās seems to approve this teaching, but, consistently with his *advaita* leanings, to hold that absorption is a possible condition for the *mukta* to experience. Thus, at Ar.C. 8, when the sage Śarabhaṅga consumes his body in the sacrificial fire, and by Rāma's grace departs to Vaikuṇṭha, the poet adds this comment: 'But the sage was not absorbed into Hari (*hari-tīna*) because he had received the gift of separate devotion (*bheda-bhakti*) before he died.' This suggests the possibility of absorption; and the same suggestion appears to be made in the difficult passage in

the *Lankākāṇḍa* where Daśarath leaves heaven to visit his son (L.C. 110 and note).

For ordinary social purposes Tulasi Dās, if not as exclusive as Rāmānuja and his disciples of the south, was as strict as the more liberal Rāmānanda. His first homage, after that due to his *guru*, is paid to the Brāhmans (B.C. 2), whom he is never tired of exalting as 'gods on earth' (*bhūṣura*: A.C. 126). The greatest sin Kākabhuśundi could commit was disrespect to a Brāhmaṇ (U.D. 106ff.). 'A Brāhmaṇ is to be reverenced,' says Rāma to Kabandha, 'even though he curse you and beat you and use harsh words—so say the saints. A Brāhmaṇ must be revered though he be devoid of goodness or virtue; but a Śūdra never, however virtuous and learned' (Ar.C. 32). There are stories, too, such as that of Pratāpabhānni in the *Bälakāṇḍa*, which illustrate the irrevocable power of the Brāhmaṇ's curse, and Brāhmaṇ seers and sages throughout are greeted with the most profound reverence by the Kṣatriya Rāma and his brothers. Rāma teaches his friends that the worship of the Brāhmaṇs' feet is the 'one deed of merit in the world' (U.C. 43). So also Kākabhuśundi, in his lurid description of the iniquity rampant in the Kaliyuga, lays stress on the self-exaltation of the Śūdra and the degradation of the Brāhmaṇ and the general neglect of the rules of caste (U.C. 96ff.).

In contrast to this attitude is Tulasi Dās's doctrine that all creatures in the world—men, women, outcastes, demons and even animals and unclean vultures—are eligible for final liberation if only they put their faith in Rāma or even repeat the sacred Name at the time of death. 'Cāndāls, Śavaras, Khaśas, Yavanas, Kols and Kirāts, ignorant and base though they be, by uttering the Name of Rāma become wholly pure' (A.D. 194); and again, 'He saved the harlot, Ajāmila, the huntsman, the vulture, the elephant and many another wicked wretch; an Ābhīr, too, a Yavana, a Kirāt, a Khaśa, a Cāndāl and all who are most defiled by sin are purified if they repeat but once the Name of Rāma' (U.Ch. 14). If Rāma and his brothers, and even Vasiṣṭha, do not reverence the low-born Niṣāda Guha, at least they treat him with the utmost affection as a true *Rāma-bhakta* (A.C. 196; A.C. 243ff.). Mārīca, Kumhbhakarṇa and even Rāvan, and all the demons slain by Rāma's arrows, enter his realm; but their inclusion, and that of the elephant and the vulture, is hardly consistent with the doctrine that only those born in human form are eligible for release without undergoing further rebirth (U.C. 41ff.; U.C. 116; cf. U.C. 84; U.C. 105).

Tulasi's attitude to women has often been criticized. He is able to draw the perfect pattern of womanhood, Sītā, the faithful wife, whom Anasūyā instructs in conjugal duty. Yet even Anasūyā says that woman is 'inherently impure' and only wins to highest bliss if she serve her husband faithfully (Ar.S. 5). There are *bhaktās*, too, such as the low-caste Śavari (Ar.C. 32ff.) and the female ascetic who entertained Hanumān and his friends (K.D. 24ff.). Kausalyā is the perfect mother. But for the most part Tulasi Dās appears to hold women in very low esteem. He himself makes, and puts into the mouths of his characters, the most derogatory remarks about them. A woman, as such, is not worthy to hear the story of Rāma (B.C. 110); woman, according to Nārada, is all that is evil, 'a most dangerous and tormenting foe; a night, impenetrably dark, to bring delight to all the owls of sin; a hook to catch all the fish of sense and strength and goodness and truth', and he attributes his censure to the saints and the sacred books (Ar.D. 43ff.). A young woman, says the poet, is like the flame of a lamp, and the soul a moth (Ar.D. 46). A woman, says Ocean, is only fit for beating, like a drum, a village boor, a Śūdra and a beast (S.C. 59). Rāvan lists eight defects in a woman's nature—foolhardiness, falsity, fickleness, deceit, timidity, folly, impurity and cruelty (L.C. 16). Rāma himself, when grieving over wounded Lakṣman, says the loss of a wife is no great matter compared with the loss of a brother (L.C. 61).

In short, even when allowance has been made for the fact that some of these scathing remarks are made by characters in the drama, Tulasi Dās seems to relegate women to a very low place in the order of creation and to consider them innately sensual, born to tempt the male; but he admits the possibility of their final liberation if, like Sītā, exceptional because divine, they devote themselves as *bhaktās* to Rāma and fulfil their function as faithful wives. 'He for God only, she for God in him.' (See Ar.C. 4; A.C. 145.)



## THE HOLY LAKE OF THE ACTS OF RĀMA

### CHILDHOOD

[*Sloka.*] Homage to Vāṇī<sup>1</sup> and Viśvāyaka, inventors of letters and all their significance, of styles and metres, too, and of auspicious prayers !

Homage to Bhavāni and Śamkara, Faith and Trust in person, apart from whom adepts<sup>2</sup> see not the Lord who dwells within them !

Homage to the *guru*,<sup>3</sup> perfect in knowledge and eternal, Śamkara himself, on whom alone dependent even the crescent moon is everywhere adored !

Homage to the lord of poets<sup>4</sup> and the lord of monkeys,<sup>5</sup> of perfect purity and wisdom, who haunt the holy forest that is the excellence of Sītā and Rāma !

I bow before Sītā, Rāma's well-beloved, the cause of creation, preservation and dissolution, destroyer of pain and source of every blessing !

Homage to the Lord Hari, whose name is Rāma, to whose illusive power is subject the whole universe with Brahmā and all the gods and demons ; because of whose true being all this unreal world seems true, as when a rope is thought to be a snake ; whose feet are the only boat for those who would cross the sea of birth and death ;<sup>6</sup> first cause beyond all other causes !

<sup>1</sup> For all names and legends to which allusion is made see the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> A *siddha* is a semi-divine being of great purity and holiness, possessing the eight *siddhis*, or supernatural faculties (see note on B.C. 22) ; *siddhas* dwell in the *bhuvarloka* between the earth and the sun, and live to the end of a *kalpa*. The term is also used for any great seer or an adept who by austerities has acquired the *siddhis*.

<sup>3</sup> The *guru* is a spiritual preceptor who initiates the youth into the *mantra*, conducts such religious ceremonies as investiture with the sacred thread and instructs him in the scriptures. The pupil regards his *guru* with the utmost reverence.

<sup>4</sup> Vālmīki.

<sup>5</sup> Hanumān.

<sup>6</sup> *bhava* : existence, equivalent to *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and death, from which only Rāma can deliver mankind.

## 2 THE HOLY LAKE OF THE ACTS OF RĀMA

Now in accord with all the Purāṇas,<sup>1</sup> the Vedas<sup>2</sup> and the Āgamas,<sup>3</sup> that which is told in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and culled from other sources too<sup>4</sup> Tulasi for his own soul's delight declares at length, the story of Raghunāth, composed in very charming modern speech.

[S.] May he,<sup>5</sup> by thinking on whom success is won, lord of hosts, whose face is the face of a noble elephant, perfection of wisdom and abode of virtue, show me his favour !

May he<sup>6</sup> by whose grace the tongue of the dumb is loosed and the cripple climbs the steepest hill, the merciful Lord who burns to ashes the foulness of the Kaliyuga,<sup>7</sup> show me his compassion !

May he<sup>8</sup> who ever rests upon the Sea of Milk, dark as the dark-blue lotus, with eyes dawn-bright as lotuses of the pond new-opened, make his dwelling in my heart !

May he<sup>8</sup> whose body is fair as jasmine or the moon, beloved spouse of Umā, home of tender mercy, lover of the humble, slayer of Mayana, show me his grace !

I do homage to the lotus feet of my *guru*, ocean of grace, Hari in human form,<sup>9</sup> whose words are the rays of the sun to disperse the deep darkness of powerful ignorance ! [C. 1.] I do homage to the dust of my *guru*'s lotus feet, sweet to the taste and fragrant and full of the flavour of love, delightful powder of the ambrosial root that heals all life's attendant ills ; smeared on the virtuous man like the pure ashes on Śambhu's body ; beautiful, auspicious and bringing forth joy ; removing the foulness from the fair mirror of the votary's mind, and, applied as a sect-mark, granting mastery of all perfections. The brightness of the nails of the holy *guru*'s feet is as the brightness of jewels ; when one dwells upon it, divine vision illuminates the heart ; that fair brilliance scatters the darkness of ignorance ; thrice blessed he in whose soul it dawns !

<sup>1</sup> Eighteen sacred books, containing the body of Hindu mythology, from which Tulasi Dās drew many of the legends to which he alludes.

<sup>2</sup> *nigama* : a passage from the Vedas or the Veda itself.

<sup>3</sup> *āgama* : a collection of traditional doctrines or precepts. Perhaps Tulasi Dās attached special value to the Pañcarātra Āgamas, which Rāmānuja accepted as valid.

<sup>4</sup> See Introd., p. xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Ganeśa.

<sup>6</sup> Vigru, or Nārāyaṇa, incarnate as Rāma.

<sup>8</sup> Siva.

<sup>7</sup> See Introd., p. xxxiv.

<sup>9</sup> *narorūpa hari* : Tulasi Dās's *guru* was Narahari. See Introd., p. xxi.

Then the heart's clear eyes are opened and the errors and pains of the night of existence are dispersed, and the acts of Rāma, like hidden diamonds and rubies plain to see, are discovered, in whatever mine they be.

[D. 1.] As the aspirant, applying to his eyes the magic ointment, becomes adept and wise, and beholds and marvels at many a treasure in hill and wood and earth, [C. 2.] so the dust of the *guru*'s feet is a soft and pleasant ointment, ambrosia to the eyes, removing the defects of vision. With that ointment I cleanse the eyes of my understanding and relate the acts of Rāma that release from birth and death.

First, I do homage to the feet of the Brāhmans, who solve all doubts that spring from ignorance. In fair and loving terms I reverence the company of saints in whom all goodness dwells. The acts of a saint are good, like the acts of the cotton-plant, whose produce is dry and white and thread-like.<sup>1</sup> Though he suffer ill-usage, he hides the faults of others, and thus is worthy of reverence and wins honour in the world. The company of saints is joyous and blissful, a living moving Prayāga in the world, where flows the stream of Gaṅgā that is faith in Rāma, and the habit of contemplation on the Absolute is the Sarasvatī; instruction in acts permitted and forbidden, that purifies the Kaliyuga, is called the Yamunā; and the stories of Hari and Hara that bring all joy and blessing to the hearer are glorious as Trivenī. Trust unmoved in one's own religious duty is the banyan, and pious works are those who frequent that holy place, which all may reach with ease on any day in any land, a place of pilgrimage that heals of all suffering those who reverently seek it, ineffable, not of this world, granting immediate fruit, of influence manifest.

[D. 2.] The faithful who with joyful heart hear and understand, and with the utmost devotion bathe at this Prayāga of saints assembled, win the four rewards<sup>2</sup> while still alive. [C. 3.] The effect of the bath is seen at once; crows become cuckoos<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *nirasa visada gunamaya*: the words have a double meaning which it is not possible to represent in translation. The saint is without *rāsa*, i.e. emotional attachments; he is *visada*, i.e. without the darkness of ignorance and sin; *guna* has the meaning of thread for the cotton and goodness for the saint. The process of making cotton into cloth is regarded as rough treatment; yet the cloth returns good for evil by covering the body.

<sup>2</sup> *cāri phala*: *dharma*, ethical perfection; *artha*, wealth; *kāma*, sensual delights; *mokṣa*, final release.

<sup>3</sup> *pika*: *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, syn. *koela*.

## 4 THE HOLY LAKE OF THE ACTS OF RĀMA

cranes<sup>1</sup> become swans.<sup>2</sup> Let no one marvel when he hears it, for the influence of good company is no secret. Vālmīki, Nārada and Agastya have told their stories with their own lips. All creatures in the world, conscious and unconscious, all beings that swim in the water or walk on dry land or fly in the air, which at any time or place, by any effort whatsoever, have gained understanding and renown, final release, power and prosperity,—be sure that their goal has been attained by the influence of the company of the good; for no other means thereto is found in the world or in the Veda. Apart from the company of the good there can be no right judgement, and communion with the saints cannot easily be enjoyed without the grace of Rāma.

Fellowship with the saints is the root of the tree of joy and fortune; perfection is its fruit and all the means thereto its flowers. Rogues are reformed by association with the good as iron is made gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone. But if by chance good men fall into bad company, they still pursue their virtuous course like the jewel in the serpent's head.<sup>3</sup> Even Brahmā, Hari, Hara, poets and scholars shrink from describing the powerful influence of the good; then how can I describe it any better than a vegetable-seller all the merits of a gem?

[D. 3a.] I do homage to the saints who regard all alike and know no friend or foe, just as a lovely flower, clasped in both hands, sheds equal fragrance on the two.<sup>4</sup> [3b.] O ye saints of guileless heart who desire the welfare of the world, I know your loving nature; hear then my childlike prayer, be gracious and bestow on me devotion to the feet of Rāma!

[C. 4.] Next, in all sincerity I do homage to the gang of villains who without cause return evil for good; for whom another's loss is gain; who rejoice in a neighbour's ruin and grieve over his prosperity. They are as Rāhus to the full moon of the glory of Hari and Hara, and as the valiant Sahasrabāhu in doing evil to others. They have a thousand eyes to detect another's faults, but fall like flies on ghi

<sup>1</sup> *baka*, or *bagalā*: a heron, *Ardea cinerea*.

<sup>2</sup> *marāla*: a species of white goose with red legs and bill; also used for a swan.

<sup>3</sup> Serpents were supposed to carry jewels in their heads, which gave them light by night; the misery of a serpent that has lost its jewel is a poetic commonplace. As the jewel, unaffected by poison, shines brightly in the poisonous serpent's head, so good men are unsullied by bad company.

<sup>4</sup> i.e., on the right hand that plucked it and the left that sheltered it.

to spoil another's good. Their fierceness is like fire, their wrath like death;<sup>1</sup> they are rich as Kuvera in the wealth of wickedness and vice; they ruin all like Ketu at his rising; well were it did they sleep like Kumbhakarna! They even sacrifice their lives to do harm to others, like hailstones that melt when they have destroyed a crop.

I do homage, as to Śesa, so to those scoundrels who with a thousand tongues maliciously proclaim the faults of others. Again, I do obeisance to those who, like Prithurāja, have ten thousand ears to hear of others' sins; and yet again, I make my prayer to those who, like Indra, ever delight in strong drink<sup>2</sup> and love to hurl harsh words like thunderbolts and spy defects in others with a thousand eyes.

[D. 4.] It is the way of villains to burn with rage when they hear of benefit done to neutral, foe or friend; this I know, and as their humble servant fold my hands and make affectionate petition.

[C. 5.] I for my part have made my supplication, but they will never depart from their ways; train a crow with the utmost care, but will it ever give up eating meat?

I do homage to the feet of saints and wicked men alike; both cause pain, but with a difference; the absence of the former is like the pain of death, the latter torment us by their presence. They are born into the world together, but like the lotus and the leech their qualities are different. The good and the bad are like nectar and strong drink, begotten of one world as these of the deep ocean.<sup>3</sup> The good and the bad, according to their deeds, win fair fame and infamy in full measure; the good are like nectar or the moon or Gaṅgā, the harmful like poison or fire or Karmanāśā. All know their merits and demerits, but whatever a man likes seems good to him; [D. 5.] wherefore the good man follows after goodness, and the vile man after vileness; nectar is praised for giving immortality, poison for causing death.

[C. 6.] The stories that are told of the sins and vices of the wicked and of the virtues of the good are like the boundless, unfathomable ocean; so only a few virtues and defects have been mentioned, because unless they are recognized, one cannot aim at the former or shun the latter. It is God who has created all the good and the

<sup>1</sup> *mahiṣea*: lord of the buffalo, i.e. Yama.

<sup>2</sup> *surānika* has a double meaning; *surā nīka* as translated, and *surānīka*, the army of the gods.

<sup>3</sup> *amṛita* and *surā* both arose from the churning of ocean. See App., s.v. Visṇu.

bad, but the Veda with careful discrimination has distinguished between virtues and faults. Veda, Itihāsa<sup>1</sup> and Purāṇa declare that God's creation is a mixture of virtue and vice. Pain and pleasure, sin and merit, day and night, saint and sinner, high caste and low, demons and gods, the lofty and the base, ambrosia and the happy life, poison and death, the world of illusion and the Absolute, the individual soul and God, wealth and poverty, the beggar and the king, Kāśī and Magadha, Gaṅgā and Karmanāśā, Mārwāṛ and Mālwā, the Brāhmaṇ and the butcher, heaven and hell, passion and desirelessness—the Vedas and the Āgamas have made distinction of their merits and demerits.

[D. 6.] The Creator has formed the world of conscious and unconscious beings, endowed with virtues and defects; the saint lays hold on virtue and rejects the evil, as the swan chooses milk and rejects the water.<sup>2</sup>

[C. 7.] When the Creator grants such discrimination, the mind abandons evil and becomes devoted to the good; but under the powerful influence of time or nature or the law of action even the good, subject to illusion, may fall from goodness. But while Hari's votaries rid themselves of sorrow and sin and rise from their fall to cleansing and glory, the wicked, even if by association with the good they do some good, never wholly lose their innate indestructible wickedness. Swindlers are honoured by the world that looks upon their honest guise, for their fair outward seeming; but in the end they are exposed, nor can they carry it through, like Kālanemi, Rāvan or Rāhu. Though they adopt poor guise, the good are honoured in the world, like Jāmbavān and Hanumān. Bad company is loss, good company is gain; so say the world and the Vedas and everyone knows it. Dust rises in the air if it companies with the wind, but if low-flowing water be its companion, it becomes mud. In the good man's house parrots and *mainās*<sup>3</sup> repeat the name of Rāma; in the bad man's house they cease not to abuse. Evil association makes smoke into soot, but the same may be made into fine ink and used for writing a Purāṇa; and the same smoke, when combined with water and fire and air, becomes a world-reviving cloud.

<sup>1</sup> Heroic history, e.g. the *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>2</sup> The swan is said to be endowed with the faculty of separating milk from water after they have been mixed together.

<sup>3</sup> *sārī*, *sārikā* or *mainā*: a small bird with a black body and yellow beak able to talk like a parrot; *Gracula religiosa*.

[D. 7a.] Planets, drugs, water, winds and clothes are good things if their company is good, and bad things if their company is bad; men of judgement can discriminate. [7b.] In the bright half and the dark half of the month the periods of light and darkness are equal, but God has given them different names. The world regards the one as bringing the moon to fullness and so honours it, and the other as leading to its decrease and so holds it in low esteem. [7c.] Knowing that all creatures in the world, conscious and unconscious, are instinct with Rāma, I ever do homage with folded hands to the lotus feet of all; [7d.] to gods and demons, men and serpents and birds, to ghosts and Fathers, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and prowlers of the night I do homage; all ye be gracious to me now!

[G. 8.] There are eight million four hundred thousand kinds of creatures born by the four modes,<sup>1</sup> that dwell in the water, on dry land and in the air; knowing the whole world to be instinct with Sītā and Rāma, I do obeisance with folded hands. O ye in whom all grace abides, look on me as your servant, and in all sincerity grant me, all of you, your loving-kindness! I have no confidence in the power of my own reason, and so I make petition to you all. I wish to tell the story of Raghupati's virtues, but my intellect is slight and his acts profound. I have no skill at all in any method of poesy; my wit is a beggar, my desire a king. My wit is very mean, my ambition high and noble; I look for nectar and nowhere find even buttermilk. Good men will pardon my audacity and hearken attentively to my childish words, as when a father and mother listen with delight to their child's lisping speech; but those will laugh who are cruel and perverse and whose thoughts are evil, men who wear their neighbours' faults as ornaments. Who does not enjoy his own verses, be they tasteful or very insipid? But those who are pleased when they hear another's poetry are good men, seldom found. There are many in the world, my friend, like ponds or rivers, which overflow their banks in time of rain; but very few are those good men who resemble the ocean that swells when it sees the moon at full.

[D. 8.] Poor is my lot, but my ambition great. Of one thing I am sure, that all good men will hear my verse with pleasure and evil men will laugh. [G. 9.] Yet even from the mockery of

<sup>1</sup> ākara cāri: (i) *svedaja*, sweat-born, as lice; (ii) *andaaja*, egg-born, as birds and snakes; (iii) *pindaja*, womb-born, as man; (iv) *udbhija*, sprouting, as trees.

wicked men I shall reap benefit. Crows call the note of the koel<sup>1</sup> harsh; as cranes laugh at the swan and frogs at the cuckoo,<sup>2</sup> so foul and evil men laugh at pure discourse. Those who are skilled in poetry<sup>3</sup> but have no love for Rāma's feet will find pleasure in jeering at this work of mine; it is composed in common speech and my ability is meagre; it is indeed ludicrous and they cannot be blamed for their laughter. To those who love the Lord's feet but whose understanding is feeble this story will seem insipid when they hear it. But those who are devoted to the feet of Hari and Hara, and who are not perversely critical, will find a sweetness in the story of Raghubar. Reflecting that the story is made glorious by devotion to Rāma, good men will listen to it and praise it with fair words. I am no poet, nor am I skilled in speech; all ignorant am I of every art and science. Letters, meanings and ornate composition are of many kinds, and of many kinds the forms and arrangements of metre; countless the distinctions of emotion and sentiment, and many the kinds of fault and excellence in verse. I possess no judgement in the art of poesy; I say what is true and write it on blank paper; [D. 9.] my composition is devoid of any excellence; nay, one excellence it has, known to all the world; men of sound sense, whose judgement is pure, will realize this and listen.

[C. 10.] It is this: herein is the noble name of Raghupati, very pure, the essence of Purāṇa and Veda, the name wherein all blessing dwells, the name that banishes ill-fortune, the name Purāri and Umā ever repeat in prayer. A composition that is admirable and the work of a good poet has no beauty without the name of Rāma, just as a lovely woman, fair as the moon and richly adorned, is not seemly if unclad. But those verses that have no elegance, the work of a poor poet, wise men repeat and listen to with reverence if they know they are stamped with the glory of Rāma's name; for good men appreciate what is excellent in them as bees suck honey from any flower. Though there be no poetic grace at all in my verses, yet in them is the splendour of Rāma manifested. So I am confident, for what is not ennobled by good companionship? Even smoke abandons its natural acridity when made fragrant

<sup>1</sup> *kalakantha*: the koel, *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, whose song is supposed to be sweet. Syn. *pika*.

<sup>2</sup> *cātaka*: the pied cuckoo; *Clamator jacobinus*.

<sup>3</sup> Some double the negatives, inserting *na* before *kabita* and *prabhu*; but this makes little distinction between the first two classes, and the negative obviously cannot be inserted before *hari*.

by the presence of perfume. My verses are clumsy, but my theme is high—the story of Rāma that brings blessing to the world.

[Ch. 1.] The story of Raghunāth brings good fortune and cleanses the Kaliyuga of its pollution.<sup>1</sup> The course of my wretched poetry winds like pure Gaṅgā's stream; yet association with the Lord's great glory will render my verses worthy and agreeable to the good. The ashes of the burning-ghāt, when smeared on Śiva's body, are lovely to contemplate and cleanse from sin.

[D. 10a.] My verses will be very dear to all, for the glory of Rāma is in them; when wood comes from Malaya, it is esteemed; who considers it to be merely wood? [10b.] Though a cow be black, its milk is white and very wholesome and all men drink it; so though my speech be countrified, it tells of the glory of Sītā and Rāma, and good men sing it and listen to it.

[C. 11.] The jewel in the serpent's head, the ruby on the mountain and the pearl in the elephant's forehead are not so very beautiful; but in a monarch's crown, or adorning a young woman, they all take on a wondrous loveliness. Even so wise men say of a clever poet's verses that his poetry springs from one source but finds its charm in another. When the poet invokes her, Śāradā leaves her heavenly dwelling in answer to his devotion and comes speedily to help him. But try as she may, all her trouble is of no avail unless she bathe him in the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts; with this in mind poets and scholars sing of the glory of Hari that washes away the foulness of the Kaliyuga. If one sings of the qualities of common people, Sarasvatī beats her brow and repents her coming. Wise men say that the heart is like the sea and genius like an oyster-shell and Śāradā the rain that falls under Arcturus' influence.<sup>2</sup> If a goodly shower of inspiration falls, each verse becomes a lovely pearl. [D. 11.] Then these pearls are fitly pierced and strung on the fair thread of Rāma's acts, and good men wear them on their pure breasts, where they glow with the beauty of their perfect love.

[C. 12.] Of those who have been born in this dreadful Kaliyuga, who act like crows disguised as swans, who abandon the Vedic path and walk in evil ways, embodiments of fraud, vessels of defilement, swindlers who call themselves Rāma's devotees, slaves

<sup>1</sup> The name of Tulasi, inserted from time to time as a kind of signature, has sometimes been omitted in translation.

<sup>2</sup> *svāti*, or *svātibund*: a drop of rain which, falling into a shell when the moon is in the 15th lunar mansion (*svāti*, Arcturus), becomes a pearl.

of gold and wrath and lust, chief in the world am I, violent, hypocritical, engrossed in worldly cares. If I were to tell of all my faults, my story would be so long that I should never end it; so I have recounted but a very few, enough for the wise to understand the whole. No one who takes my various apologies into account will find fault with my story when he hears it; those who in spite of all still doubt are more stupid and poor of wit than I. I am no poet, nor am I called clever, but I sing the excellence of Rāma according to the measure of my understanding; how wondrous are the acts of Raghupati, how poor my wit, devoted to this world! Tell me, what is a flock of wool in the storm-wind before whose blast Mount Meru flies through the air? When I think on the infinite power of Rāma, I hesitate, afraid to tell his story; [D. 12.] for Śāradā, Śeṣa, Maheśa and Brahmā, the Vedas, Purāṇas and Āgamas are ever singing his perfection, yet can but say, 'Not thus, not thus'.<sup>1</sup>

[C. 13.] Though all know the power of the Lord to be thus ineffable, yet none can be satisfied without telling of it; and the reason for this the Veda has explained—that the effect of such worship has been said to be of many kinds. God, who is one, desireless, without form or name, unborn, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss,<sup>2</sup> Spirit Supreme, all-pervading, universal, has taken bodily form and wrought all manner of works, simply to do his faithful servants good, a Lord of perfect grace who loves his suppliant people. He bestows his affection and gracious favour on his own, and in his loving-kindness has refrained from wrath. Raghurāja restores what is lost and befriends the poor; he is single-minded, almighty, Lord of all. The wise know this and tell of Hari's glory; they sanctify their speech and make it fruitful of all good. On this I rely<sup>3</sup> and proceed to tell the story of Raghupati's virtues, bowing my head before the feet of Rāma. The sages of old have sung Hari's glorious renown; it will be easy for me, my friend, to follow in their footsteps. [D. 13.] A river may be very broad, but if a king has built a bridge across it, even very tiny ants may mount it and pass to the other side with ease.

<sup>1</sup> *neti neti*: a phrase which frequently occurs in the Upaniṣads.

<sup>2</sup> *saccidananda*: translated by Radhakrishnan 'infinite existence, absolute truth and pure delight'. (*Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 150.)

<sup>3</sup> i.e. not on my own ability but on the meritorious effect of praise and worship.

[C. 14.] Even so I shall take heart of grace and relate the charming story of Raghupati.

I do homage to the lotus feet of Vyāsa and the other famous poets who have reverently told of the fair fame of Hari; fulfil ye all my desires! I do obeisance to the poets of this Kaliyuga who have recounted all the perfections of Raghupati. To all those skilled poets of common speech who have told of the acts of Hari in the vulgar tongue, those who have been and are and are yet to be, I pay sincere respect. Show me your favour and grant this boon, that my verses may be honoured where good men are gathered together. If the wise esteem not his poetry, the stupid poet's labour is in vain. Only that renown or poetry or power is of value which, like the Gaṅgā, brings benefit to all. Fair is Rāma's renown, but my verses are clumsy; such disparity fills me with anxious doubt. Yet by your grace my task may be made easy; for even canvas is beautiful if embroidered with silk.

[D. 14a.] If poetry be simple and tell of spotless fame, the wise esteem it, and when enemies hear it, they forget their inveterate enmity and praise it. [14b.] Yet such verses need clear intellect and my intellectual power is slight; therefore again and again I make my supplication; be gracious to me that I may sing of Hari's glory! [14c.] Ye poets and learned men, graceful swans on the Holy Lake of the Acts of Raghubar, hear my childlike prayer, regard my earnest zeal, and be gracious!

[S. 14d.] I do homage to the lotus feet of the sage<sup>1</sup> who composed the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which, though it tells of the demon Rough, is smooth and charming, and faultless though it tells of the demon Fault.<sup>2</sup>

[14e.] I do homage to the four Vedas, boats to bear the soul across the sea of birth and death, which never weary for a moment while they sing of Raghubar's unsullied fame.

[14f.] I do homage to the dust of the feet of Brahmā, who created that ocean whence arose the good, like nectar, the moon and the cow of plenty,<sup>3</sup> and also the bad, like poison and strong drink.

[D. 14g.] With folded hands I do homage to the feet of gods and

<sup>1</sup> Vālmīki.

<sup>2</sup> The demons Khara (rough) and Dūṣaṇa (fault) were slain by Rāma; the line plays on their names.

<sup>3</sup> dhenu, i.e. kāmadhenu: a cow that fulfilled all desires; she was brought to light by the churning of the ocean. See App., s.vv. Viṣṇu and Vasitha.

Brahmans and wise men and planets,<sup>1</sup> and say, 'Be favourable and fulfil all my fair desires!'

[C. 15.] Next, I do homage to Sarasvatī and Gāngā, both holy and enchanting streams; the latter washes away the sin of him who bathes therein and drinks of its waters; the former destroys the ignorance of him who speaks or hears of it. I do reverence to Maheśa and Bhavānī, who are my *gurus* and my parents, friends to the humble and daily givers of good things, servants, lords and companions of Sītā's spouse and in every way true friends of Tulasī; to Hara, too, and Girijā, who for the good of the world and with regard to the evil of this age composed a number of spells in a barbarous tongue, incongruous syllables, meaningless mutterings, whose influence is manifest by the power of Maheśa.<sup>2</sup> That same lord of Umā will grant me his favour and make my story a source of joy and blessing; so, thinking on Pārvatī and Śiva and receiving their grace, I tell the story of Rāma with loving zeal. By Śiva's grace my verse will be made beautiful, as is the night by the moon and her company of stars. Those who hear and repeat this story with love and understanding will be cleansed from the defilement of the Kaliyuga and, loving the feet of Rāma, will have their share in perfect bliss.

[D. 15.] If the grace of Hara and Gauri be at all truly with me, then all the influence I claim for my verses, composed in common speech, will be a reality.

[C. 16.] I do homage to the very holy city of Avadh and to the river Sarayū that washes away the stains of the Kaliyuga; and again I do reverence to the men and women of that city, whom the Lord loves so dearly; for he counted as nought all the sins of those who slandered Sītā, nay, he reassured them and gave them a place in his own realm.<sup>3</sup>

I do homage to Kausalyā, renowned throughout the world, in whom Raghupati became manifest, as the fair moon in the eastern

<sup>1</sup> *graha*: v.l. *guru*.

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the magic spells of the Tantras, revealed by Śiva to Pārvatī; they are mostly unintelligible syllables, as Om, Ain, Hrin, Srin.

<sup>3</sup> A washerman's wife went to her father's house without her husband's leave and stayed there for three days. When she returned, he refused to receive her, saying, 'Am I Rāma, who took back Sītā after she had been eleven months with Rāvān?' Instead of punishing the washerman for this slander, Rāma sent Sītā away to Vālmiki's hermitage. This story is not told by Tulasī Dās.

quarter of the sky, to bring joy to the world and to blight the wicked, as frost the lotus. I reverence, too, in thought and word and deed king Daśarath and all his queens, esteeming them as patterns of piety and perfect bliss. Be gracious to me as the servant of your son, ye by whose fashioning the Creator became great, as Rāma's parents of greatness unsurpassed! [S. 16.] I do homage to the king of Avadh, who loved the feet of Rāma with such true love that when the Lord of compassion left him he abandoned his precious body as though it were a worthless straw. [C. 17.] I do reverence to Videha and his household, whose love for Rāma's feet was profound; though he concealed it in the exercise of spiritual and material power, it was revealed at the first sight of Rāma.

First among the brothers I reverence the feet of Bharat, whose rule of life and rigid vows cannot be described; his soul was greedy for the lotus feet of Rāma, as a bee for honey; he would not leave his side. I do homage to the lotus feet of Laksman, cool, beautiful, bringing joy to the faithful, whose glory was like a staff to bear the stainless banner of Raghupati's renown. He was the thousand-headed Śeṣa who came down for the sake of the world to relieve the earth of fear. May that son of Sumitrā ever show me his favour, ocean of grace, mine of perfection! I do reverence to the lotus feet of Śatrughna, valiant and chivalrous companion of Bharat; and to the mighty warrior Hanumān I make petition, whose glory Rāma himself has celebrated. [S. 17.] Yea, I do reverence to the Son of the Wind,<sup>1</sup> very wise, a fire to the forest of evil-doers, in whose heart Rāma, bearing bow and arrows, makes his home.

[C. 18.] The monkey king,<sup>2</sup> the king of the bears,<sup>3</sup> the king of the demons,<sup>4</sup> Āṅgada and all the company of monkeys—I do homage to the fair feet of all; for, though fashioned in lowly form, they yet found Rāma. I do homage to the lotus feet of all the birds and beasts and gods and men and demons who worship the feet of Raghupati and serve Rāma without selfish motive. Śukadeva, Sanaka and his brethren and all devotees, Nārada the sage and all high sages, wise and learned, I reverence with my head upon the ground; O mighty sages, be gracious to me as your servant!

I make my prayer to the two lotus feet of Jāṇaki, Janak's daughter, Mother of the world, most beloved of him in whom all

<sup>1</sup> Hanumān.

<sup>2</sup> Sugriva.

<sup>3</sup> Jāmbavān.

<sup>4</sup> Vibhīṣan.

mercy dwells, that by her grace I may win to clear understanding. Again, I do homage in thought and word and deed to the lotus feet of Raghunāyak, all-powerful, lotus-eyed, bearing bow and arrows, banishing the troubles of the faithful and granting them joy.

[D. 18.] I do homage to the feet of Sitā and Rāma, who dearly love the afflicted and who are truly one, as the word is one with its meaning, and water with the wave, though they are distinguished in speech.

[C. 19.] I do homage to RĀMA, the Name of Raghubar, signifying fire and sun and moon;<sup>1</sup> essence of Brahmā, Hari and Hara;<sup>2</sup> vital breath of the Veda; impersonal, unique, treasure-house of all perfections; the Great Spell uttered by Maheśa, who teaches it as effecting final release at Kāśi. Ganeśa knows its power, for by the might of the Name he is first to be worshipped. The father of poetry<sup>3</sup> knows the power of the Name, for he was purified by repeating it backwards. Hearing from Śiva that the Name of Rāma was equal to a thousand other names, Bhavāni repeated it and joined her husband's meal; and when he saw her heartfelt love, Hara rejoiced and made that ornament of women his own female ornament. Śiva knows well the power of the Name, by virtue of which the deadly poison had the effect of ambrosia.

[D. 19.] Devotion to Raghupati is the season of rain; his faithful servants are the growing rice, and the two fair syllables of Rāma's Name are the months of Śrāvanya and Bhādon.<sup>4</sup>

[C. 20.] Two sweet and ravishing syllables that are the eyes of the alphabet and the life of the faithful, easy to remember, bringing happiness to all, gain in this world and salvation in the next; very lovely to repeat, to hear and to contemplate; as dear to Tulasi as Rāma and Lakṣman. When they are uttered, devotion separates them, but they are as naturally bound together as Brahma and the individual soul; fair brothers, like Nara and Nārāyaṇa; guardians of the world and, especially, saviours of the faithful; lovely jewels

<sup>1</sup> According to commentators, Raghubar is mentioned to distinguish our Rāma from Paraśu-rāma and Bala-rāma. Fire (*kriṣṇu*) contains र, the sun (*bhānu*) contains श, and the moon (*himakara*) contains म. र, like fire, burns up good and evil deeds; श, like the sun, disperses the darkness of ignorance; म, like the moon, with its cool rays relieves the sufferer.

<sup>2</sup> The Name performs the three functions of the triune deity—creation, preservation and destruction.

<sup>3</sup> Vālmīki.

<sup>4</sup> Śrāvanya: July-August. Bhādon: August-September.

in the ears of the beauteous lady Faith; moon and sun shining clear for the good of the world. Sweet taste and satisfaction they bring, like the nectar of salvation; like the tortoise and the serpent, upholding the world; as a bee to the lovely lotus of the faithful soul; as sweet to the tongue as Hari and Haladhara to Yaśodā.

[D. 20.] Of the two syllables of the Name of Raghubar one gleams like a royal umbrella and one like a jewelled crown over all the letters of the alphabet.<sup>1</sup>

[C. 21.] A name and that which is named are regarded as one and the same, but the close connexion between them is that of master and servant. Name and form are two attributes of God; they are ineffable and without origin, known only by right understanding. It is a mistake to ask which of the two is the greater and which is the less; when they hear the difference between them, the good will understand. Forms are seen to be dependent on names; the form cannot be known apart from the name. Any particular form cannot be recognized, even if placed on the hand, unless the name is known; but if without seeing the form one meditates on the name, the form too enters the heart as an object of passionate devotion. The mystery of name and form is unutterable; it brings joy to those who understand it, but it cannot be expressed. The name bears testimony to the impersonal and the personal alike; it makes both known, a wise interpreter.

[D. 21.] If you would have light within and without, place the Name of Rāma on your tongue, like a jewelled lamp on the threshold of the door.

[C. 22.] As their tongues repeat the Name, ascetics awake, free from desire, divorced from the Creator's world, and experience divine felicity, unequalled, ineffable, unsullied, knowing neither name nor form. Those who would know profound spiritual mysteries learn them by repeating the Name. Aspirants, too, repeat the Name, lost in contemplation, and so become adept and acquire the eight miraculous powers.<sup>2</sup> Disciples repeat the Name

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the forms taken by र and ण when written above the line as *repha* (^) and *anundāika* (\*) respectively.

<sup>2</sup> See note on B. Sloka. The eight miraculous powers of the *siddha* are: *apimā*, becoming infinitesimally small; *mahimā*, becoming infinitely large; *garimā*, becoming infinitely heavy; *laghimā*, becoming infinitely light; *prāpti*, getting all one desires; *prākāmya*, doing all one wishes; *Mita*, supreme domination; *vasitva*, subjugation.

when sore distressed; their troubles are removed and they are happy. Thus Rāma has four kinds of votary in the world, and all four are meritorious, sinless and noble. All four wise types of devotee rely upon the Name, but the man of intuitive wisdom is dearest to the Lord; in the four ages and the four Vedas his Name is mighty, but mightiest of all in this Kaliyuga; there is no other refuge.

[D. 22.] Those who are rid of all selfish desire and rest absorbed in devotion to Rāma have made their souls like fish in the ambrosial lake of the love of the Name.

[C. 23.] There are two forms of the Absolute—impersonal and personal; unutterable, fathomless, without beginning and unique. In my judgement the Name is greater than both, for by its own power it has made both subject to itself. Let not the good think their servant's statement to be overbold; I am stating my loving and devout belief. The two forms of the Absolute may be known like fire; the one within the wood, the other visible. Both forms are hard to understand, but both are made known by the Name; and therefore I declare that the Name is greater than the Absolute and than Rāma. The Absolute is all-pervading, one, indestructible, the very essence of True Being, Consciousness and Bliss; but though such an immutable Lord dwells within the heart, every creature in the world is miserable and sad; but when one seeks out the true significance of the Name and practises its utterance, that Lord becomes manifest, as the value of a gem when it is examined.

[D. 23.] Thus the power of the Name is immeasurably greater than the impersonal; and I declare that in my judgement the Name is greater than Rāma too.

[C. 24.] Rāma took the form of man to help the faithful and endured suffering to make the good happy; but votaries who lovingly repeat the Name are without difficulty filled with joy and bliss. Rāma redeemed one ascetic's wife;<sup>1</sup> but the Name has converted the evil hearts of millions of wicked men. For the seer's sake Rāma put an end to Suketu's daughter,<sup>2</sup> her army and her son; but the Name destroys its servants' sins and woes and despairs as the sun scatters the darkness of night. With his own hand Rāma broke the bow of Śiva; but the power of the Name shatters the terrors of rebirth.<sup>3</sup> The Lord made beautiful the Dandaka forest;

<sup>1</sup> Ahalyā.

<sup>2</sup> Tāpaskā.

<sup>3</sup> The line contains a play on words, *bhava* meaning both Śiva and rebirth.

but the Name has purified the souls of countless votaries. Raghu-nandan massacred the demon host; but the Name extirpates all the sins of the Kaliyuga. [D. 24.] To Śavari, the vulture<sup>1</sup> and other righteous servants Raghunāth granted the bliss of final release; but the Name has wrought the salvation of countless evildoers, and the story of its virtues is celebrated in the Vedas. [C. 25.] Rāma took both Sugrīva and Vibhīṣan under his protection, as everyone knows; but the Name has shown mercy to many a poor man, and for this it has won distinction both in the world and in the Vedas. Rāma gathered together his army of bears and monkeys and laboured hard to build a bridge; but at the mention of the Name the ocean of birth and death is dried up; think on this, ye saints! Rāma slew Rāvan and his family in battle and returned to his own city with Sītā; Rāma was king and Avadh his royal capital, and gods and sages sang their virtues in melodious strains; but by devoutly thinking on the Name his servants overcome the mighty forces of ignorance without effort and, lost in love, wander in the paths of their own joy; by the grace of the Name no care can touch them, even in a dream.

[D. 25.] Therefore the Name is greater than both the Absolute and Rāma and blesses even those that bless. This Maheśa knew well when he chose the Name from among the thousand million verses of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

[C. 26.] By the grace of the Name Śambhu is immortal, an auspicious figure in inauspicious guise. Śukadeva and Sanaka and all the other adepts and sages and ascetics by the grace of the Name enjoy the bliss of heaven. Nārada knew the power of the Name, for all the world loves Hari, and Hari and Hara love Nārada. When Prahlāda repeated the Name, the Lord showed him his favour and he became the chief of votaries. Dhruva repeated the Name of Hari in distress and won a place unmoved, incomparable. The Son of the Wind thought on that holy Name and made Rāma subject to himself. Ajāmila the sinner, the elephant<sup>2</sup> and the harlot<sup>3</sup> were saved by the power of Hari's Name; but why should I any more extol the Name? Rāma himself cannot sing the full perfections of the Name!

<sup>1</sup> Jaṭāyu.

<sup>2</sup> An elephant was seized by an alligator, and after a struggle lasting two thousand years was about to be drowned when he called on the name of God. God delivered him by cutting off the alligator's head.

<sup>3</sup> See App., s.v. Pingalā.

[D. 26.] In this Kaliyuga the Name of Rāma is the tree of Paradise,<sup>1</sup> the home of blessing, thinking whereon Tulasi Dās, who was nothing but intoxicating hemp, has become the sacred *tulasi* plant.<sup>2</sup>

[C. 27.] In all four ages, in time past, present and to come, and in all three spheres<sup>3</sup> creatures have been freed from care by the repetition of the Name. Veda, Purāṇa and saints agree that the fruit of all good deeds is the love of RĀMA. In the first age the Lord is pleased by contemplation, in the second by the rite of sacrifice, and in the Dvāpara by ritual worship; but the Kaliyuga is nothing but the source of sin, impure, and the hearts of men swim like fish in the sea of iniquity. In these dreadful times the Name is the tree of Paradise, and when one thinks on it, it stills all the world's disquiet. It is the Name of Rāma that grants desires in the Kaliyuga, a father and mother in this world and a friendly guide in the world to come. In the Kaliyuga no works avail nor devotion nor knowledge; the Name of Rāma is the only stay. The Kaliyuga is like Kālanemi, a demon full of deceit, and the Name a wise and powerful Hanumān to slay him. [D. 27.] The Name of Rāma is Narasimha, the Kaliyuga Hiranyakasipu; the faithful who repeat the Name are Prahlāda; these the Name will protect, but it will slay the foes of the gods.

[C. 28.] Whether one repeats the Name in love or hatred, wrath or idle mood, it brings felicity in every quarter.<sup>4</sup> Dwelling on that Name, I bow my head to Raghunāth and tell the story of Rāma's virtues. He will correct all my mistakes, for his mercy never tires of showing mercy. So noble a master as Rāma, and so wicked a servant as I! Yet for his own sake has the home of compassion been my refuge. It is the way of a good master to recognize devotion when he hears a humble prayer—so say the world and the Vedas. Rich and poor, villagers and townsmen, wise and foolish, infamous and famous, good poets and bad, men and women everywhere extol a king as best they can; and the king who is good and

<sup>1</sup> *kalapataru*; *kāmataru*: the *kalpavrikṣa* is one of five fabulous trees in Indra's heaven; it fulfils all desires.

<sup>2</sup> The *tulasi*, *Ocimum sanctum* or holy basil, is venerated by Vaiṣṇavas and its leaves are used in worship. According to the *Brahmavaivartta Purāṇa* it was formed from the hair of Tulasī. See Ar.S. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The *triloka* is heaven, earth and the lower regions.

<sup>4</sup> *disi dasahūn*; the ten quarters are the four cardinal and the four intermediate, with *tiryak*, horizontal, and *urdhvam*, perpendicular, or *adhas*, underneath, and *urdhvam*, overhead.

wise and beneficent, sprung from a part of God Himself and very gracious, hears and acknowledges their praise and devotion and humility and good intentions, and honours them all in courteous terms. If this is the way of ordinary kings, what of the lord of Kosala, the crown of wisdom? Rāma is pleased with genuine love; but who in the world is so stupid and dull of wit as I? [D. 28a.] Yet will Rāma regard the love and devotion of his foolish servant; for he is gracious who made the stones to swim upon the water and appointed monkeys and bears as his wise ministers.

[28b.] Sītā's lord the master and Tulasi Dās the servant! Everyone calls me so and I say so too, and Rāma suffers the disgrace! Very great are my insolence and sin; [C. 29.] even hell spurned me when it heard of my wickedness, and when I realize it, I tremble and am sore afraid; but Rāma has never for a moment taken my sins into account. Nay, when he heard them and considered them and looked on them with kindly eye, my master praised my faith and my intentions; though my claim sound ill, it is a sign of inward grace, and Rāma is pleased when he regards his servants' motives. The Lord remembers not the sins we have committed, but dwells a hundred times upon the purpose of the heart. The very sin for which he slew Bāli like a hunter Sugriva afterwards committed. Vibhīṣan too was guilty of the same crime, but Rāma regarded it not at all; rather, Raghubir honoured him when he met Bharat and sang his praises in the royal court.

[D. 29a.] The Lord beneath the tree and the monkeys in the branches! And yet he made them equal to himself. Nowhere is there a master kindlier than Rāma. [29b.] O Rāma, your goodness is a blessing to all; if this be true, then Tulasi's good is for ever assured.

[29c.] Thus I proclaim my merits and my faults, and once more bowing my head to all declare the spotless glory of Raghubar, the hearing of which blots out the guilt of the Kaliyuga.

[C. 30.] The beautiful story that Yājñavalkya told to the great sage Bharadvāja as they conversed I shall repeat; hear, then, all ye faithful and rejoice! Śāmbhu composed this charming tale and then of his grace told it to Umā; and the same tale he entrusted to Kākabhusundi, for he knew him to be Rāma's votary and worthy to receive the gift. Next, Yājñavalkya received it from him, and later sang it to Bharadvāja. Those sages—both he who heard and he who told the story—are of equal virtue and equal insight and

understand the mystery of Hari's sportive acts. By their own wisdom they comprehend all time, past, present and to come, plain to them as a plum held in the palm of the hand; and others too there are, Hari's votaries and men of insight, who tell and hear and understand the story in various ways.

[D. 30a.] Then I heard the same story from my *guru* at Sūkarakhet; but at that time I was very young and unintelligent and I did not understand it as I should. [30b.] The story of Rāma is mysterious and he who hears it and he who tells it must be inspired with divine wisdom; how should a stupid creature like myself grasp its meaning—an ignorant dolt, in the toils of the sin of the Kaliyuga ?

[C. 31.] However, when my *guru* had repeated the story over and over again, I began partially to understand it, as well as I could. That same story I shall write in the vulgar tongue, to satisfy myself. According to the measure of my understanding and judgement, I shall tell the story with Hari's inspiration to aid. I tell a tale that will remove my doubt and ignorance and error, and carry me across the river of rebirth. The story of Rāma brings peace to the learned and gladness to the faithful, and effaces the foul stains of the Kaliyuga. The story of Rāma is a powerful spell<sup>1</sup> to subdue the serpent of the Kaliyuga, and a stick to make visible<sup>2</sup> the fire of wisdom. The story of Rāma is the cow of plenty in this Kaliyuga, a welcome life-giving drug to the faithful; a river of nectar on earth; a tale to free from fear and to swallow like a snake the frogs of error. It destroys hell and gives aid to the saints as Pārvati wrought the destruction of the demon host and saved the gods. It dwells in the assembly of saints as Laks̄mi on the Ocean of Milk, and bears the burden of the universe like firm earth. It is as the river Yamunā in the world to blacken the faces of the messengers of Death, and as Kāśī to grant release to the living from the cycle of birth and death; dear to Rāma as the sacred *tulasi*; cherishing Tulasi Dās with heartfelt love like his mother Hulasi; as dear to Śiva as the river Narmadā, daughter of Mount Mekala; the sum of all success and joy and wealth; mother of all virtues, as Aditi of the gods; the furthest bound of love and faith in Raghubar.

<sup>1</sup> *bharapī* is explained as either a *mahāmantra* against serpents or a bird which makes itself small when it sees a serpent, and when the serpent takes it into its mouth, spreads its wings and bursts the serpent's head.

i.e., by attrition.

[D. 31.] The story of Rāma is the river Mandākīni, and the pure heart is Citrakūṭa; and sincere love is the forest where Sītā and Raghubīr roamed.

[C. 32.] The acts of Rāma are a beauteous talisman<sup>1</sup> and adorn the wisdom of the saints as charming ornaments a woman. The sum of Rāma's virtues is a blessing to the world, granting release and wealth, the performance of duty on earth and salvation in the world to come; a true instructor in the ways of knowledge, detachment and austerity; a divine physician to cure the dread disease of transmigration; father and mother to beget love for Sītā and Rāma; the seed of all strict vows and religious rule. They still the storms of sin, affliction and care; they are our loving guardians in this world and the next; doughty ministers of wisdom, their king; Agastya to drink up the boundless ocean of greed; lion-cubs to slay the elephants of lust and anger and foul sin in the forest of the minds of the faithful; Purāri's worshipful and most beloved guests, and clouds that at desire extinguish the forest fires of poverty. A very precious spell are they to counter the snake of sensual desire; potent to delete the lines of evil destiny graven on the forehead, hard to efface; like the sun's rays to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and quickening Rāma's servants as the rain-burdened cloud brings life to fields of rice. Like the generous tree of Paradise they grant the heart's desire; like Hari and Hara, easy of access to those who serve them and bringers of joy; like stars that shine in the autumn sky of the good poet's mind; abundant life to Rāma's faithful votaries. They are like the full enjoyment of the fruit of all good deeds; like saints who work sincerely for the welfare of the world; cleansing from sin like Gaṅgā's flood.

[D. 32a.] The sum of Rāma's perfections burns up all heresy and carping criticism and evil habits and the deceit, hypocrisy and insincerity that mark this Kaliyuga, as a blazing fire consumes its fuel.

[32b.] The acts of Rāma are like the rays of the full moon, bringing joy to all, and of special comfort and great gain to the souls of the faithful, as the moon to the lily and the partridge.<sup>2</sup>

[C. 33.] I shall now repeat in substance the questions that Bhavāni put and Śāmkara's detailed answers, reciting the story in

<sup>1</sup> cintāmani: a fabulous gem, supposed to fulfil all the desires of its possessor.

<sup>2</sup> cakora: bartavelle, or Greek partridge: *Alectoris graeca*. It is supposed to subsist upon moonbeams.

varied styles. Let not him who has not heard this story before be astonished when he hears it; wise men who hear this marvellous story are not astonished, for they realize that there is no limit to the number of Rāma's stories in the world. This is what they believe, that Rāma has come down to earth in many forms and that there are a thousand million *Rāmāyanas* of measureless length. High sages have sung in different aeons<sup>1</sup> and various ways the glorious acts of Hari; bear this in mind and doubt not, and listen to the story with reverence and love. [D. 33.] Rāma is infinite and his perfections infinite, and boundless the extent of his stories; so men of clear understanding will not wonder when they hear them.

[C. 34.] Thus banishing all doubt and placing on my head the dust of my *guru*'s lotus feet, once more with folded hands I make my prayer to all, that no fault may attach to my telling of the story. Now I bow my head with reverence to Śiva and tell the sacred tale of Rāma's virtues. In the Samvat year of sixteen hundred and thirty-one<sup>2</sup> I lay my head on Hari's feet and write the story; on Tuesday, the ninth day of the month of Caita, in the city of Avadh, I begin this story of his acts. It is the day when Rāma was born, and on that day—so say the Vedas—all the holy places gather together at Avadh; demons and serpents, birds, men, sages and gods come and do reverence to Raghunāyak, and wise men celebrate the birthday festival and sing the high renown of Rāma. [D. 34.] Great companies of devotees bathe in Sarayū's purifying stream; they meditate on Rāma's beautiful dark body and repeat his Name.

[C. 35.] Veda and Purāṇa declare that sin is washed away by the sight and touch of the river, by bathing in its stream and drinking of its water. Very holy is the river and of greatness immeasurable; not even Śāradā for all her cloudless genius can describe it. The glorious city of Avadh grants men entrance to Rāma's home; it is renowned throughout the world and very holy; the countless creatures in the world, of all four modes of birth,<sup>3</sup> if they put off the body at Avadh, enter no more the cycle of mortality. Because I hold this city to be altogether lovely, granting all success and source of every blessing, I have here begun this sacred story, destructive of all lust and pride and hypocrisy in him who hears it.

<sup>1</sup> *kalpa*: see Introd., pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> For the date of composition see Introd., pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>3</sup> See note on B.C. 8.

Its name is the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts, and those who listen to it are refreshed; a soul that burns with the fever of worldly desire, like an elephant in a forest fire, is happy if it plunge into this Lake. Śaṁbhu composed the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts, a pure and lovely poem that delights the sage, subdues the faults of mind and thought and speech, and pain and poverty, and puts an end to wicked ways and all the sin of the Kaliyuga. Maheśa composed it and stored it up in his own mind,<sup>1</sup> and at the fitting time recited it to Pārvati; and that is why Hara, rejoicing to see it in his own heart, gave it the fair name of the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts. That same delightful, glorious story I repeat; hear it, ye faithful, with reverence and attention!

[D. 35.] Now with my thoughts on Umā and on him on whose banner is blazoned the bull<sup>2</sup> I explain all these topics—what sort of Lake it is, how it was formed, and why it became known to all the world.

[C. 36.] By the grace of Śaṁbhu Tulasi's heart was inspired, so that he became the poet of the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts. He makes it as charming as his wit is able, but listen kindly, ye faithful, and correct it. Right thoughts are the earth and the heart a deep place therein; Veda and Purāṇa are the sea, and the saints the clouds which rain down praise of Rāma's glory in sweet, refreshing and auspicious showers. The sportive acts they tell of Rāma as man are the pure cleansing property of rain, while loving devotion, beyond the power of words to describe, is its sweetness and coolness. That rain refreshes the rice-fields of good deeds and is the life of Rāma's faithful votaries. Its cleansing water falls on the earth of understanding and flows in one stream through the fair channel of the ears; it fills the holy place that is the Lake of the mind and settles there, a permanent source of joy and cool entrancing loveliness.

[D. 36.] The four beautiful and noble dialogues,<sup>3</sup> composed with thought and understanding, are the four charming *ghāts* of this pure and lovely Lake. [C. 37.] The seven parts are the beauteous steps that delight the soul when viewed with the eyes of wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> *mānasa*: mind; a play on words, *mānasa* also being used for the Holy Lake.

<sup>2</sup> Śiva.

<sup>3</sup> Those between Śiva and Pārvati, Kākabhuṣundi and Garuḍ, Yājñavalkya and Bharadvāja, and Tulasi Dās and the saints.

The majesty of Raghupati, transcending the elements of nature<sup>1</sup> and unimpeded, I shall declare to be the depths of its clear water. The glory of Rāma and Sītā is its ambrosial flood; the similes are the enchanting play of its ripples; the *caupāīs* are the lovely lotus leaves, thick-clustering; poetic skill the lustrous oyster-pears; the elegant *chands* and *sorathās* and *dohās* gleam like a mass of many-coloured lotus flowers; the unequalled sense, the lofty sentiment and graceful language are their pollen and juice and fragrance; all the meritorious deeds are pretty swarms of bees; knowledge, detachment and thought are swans; allusions, inversions and other poetic devices are many kinds of beautiful fish. All that is said of wealth and religious duty, the fulfilment of desire and final release, these four, all thoughts on mystic intuition and scientific knowledge, the nine sentiments,<sup>2</sup> prayer, penance, austerity and detachment—all these are the graceful creatures that swim in the Lake. The hymns in praise of the good and saintly and of the Name are like the varied waterfowl; the saints assembled are like the mango-groves all round the Lake, and their faith is said to be like the season of spring. The various definitions of devotion, forbearance, compassion and continence are creeper-canopies; self-control, morality and religious observance<sup>3</sup> are their flowers, and wisdom their fruit, whose juice, as the Veda declares, is love for Hari's feet; and all the other stories and various topics are like parrots and cuckoos and birds of many hues.

[D. 37.] The thrill of emotion<sup>4</sup> is a park or garden or grove, haunted by lovely birds of joy; the pure heart is the gardener, who waters the garden with the water of love poured from his beauteous eyes.

[C. 38.] Those who sing these acts with careful heed are the skilled guardians of the Lake; and those men and women who constantly listen to them with reverence are like the high gods,

<sup>1</sup> See Introd., p. xxiii.

<sup>2</sup> The *nava-rasa*, or nine sentiments expressed in appropriate styles are: *sringāra*, love; *hāsyā*, humour; *karuṇā*, pathos; *vīra*, heroism; *raudra*, indignation; *bhayānaka*, terror; *bibhatoō*, disgust; *adbhuta*, wonder; *sānta*, tranquillity. Some add a tenth, *vātsalya*, parental tenderness.

<sup>3</sup> *yama* includes such moral qualities as refraining from violence, love of truth, continence, etc. *niyama* includes outward observances, as ceremonial purification, fasting, pilgrimage, prayer, recitation of the scriptures, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *pulaka*: erection of the hair on the body, caused by strong emotion; this is of frequent occurrence in the poem, and cannot be translated literally.

masters of the Lake. The villainous and sensual are like cranes and crows, miserable wretches that come not near this Lake; for here are no prurient tales like snails or frogs or scum, and so the lustful crow and crane are disappointed if they visit it, poor things.

It is very difficult to approach this Lake. No one can reach it without the grace of Rāma. Bad company is a bad road, difficult and dangerous, and the words of bad companions are tigers, lions and serpents in the path; and the various embarrassments of domestic business are towering, insurmountable mountains. Ignorance, pride and self-conceit are impenetrable thickets, and carping criticisms are fearful rivers.

[D. 38.] For those who have no faith—provision for the journey—nor yet enjoy the company of saints and love for Raghunāth the Lake is inaccessible. [C. 39.] Again, if a man makes his way there with great labour, and yet when he reaches the Lake, sleep like an ague overtakes him and numbness affects his heart like freezing cold, and, though he has come to the Lake, he does not bathe therein, the luckless wretch, having neither made ablution in the Lake nor drunk of its waters, returns with all his old arrogance—then, if anyone comes to ask him about it, he blames the Lake and warns the questioner. But all these obstacles hinder not the man on whom Rāma looks with special favour; that man reverently bathes in the Lake and is not consumed by the fierce fire of the three afflictions.<sup>1</sup> Those in whose heart is genuine love for Rāma never leave this Lake.

My friend, let him who wishes to bathe in this Lake diligently seek good companionship. If the poet gazes on such a Lake with the eye of the soul and plunges into its waters, his understanding is made pure, his heart is filled with bliss and ecstasy and swells with a flood of love and happiness. Then from that Lake the beauteous stream of poetry flows out, filled with the water of Rāma's stainless glory; its name is Sarayū, the source of all that is most blessed, and social and scriptural doctrine are its two fair banks. Very holy is this river, daughter of the sacred Lake, uprooting and bearing away the sins of the Kaliyuga, great ones like trees and little ones like blades of grass.

<sup>1</sup> *trayatāpa*: the three afflictions are: *ādhyātmika*, mental or physical distress, e.g. anxiety or illness; *ādhidaivika*, acts of God, e.g. excessive snow or rain, lightning stroke, devil possession, famine; *ādhibhautika*, pain caused by others, e.g. snake-bite or human violence.

[D. 39.] The three kinds of hearers<sup>1</sup> are the townships, villages and cities on either bank; the company of saints is incomparable Avadh, the source of all that is most blessed.

[C. 40.] The glorious Sarayū, that stream of fair renown, flows on to meet the river of the gods,<sup>2</sup> the river of faith in Rāma; and with them is united the great and splendid river Sona, pure as the warlike prowess of Rāma and his brother. Between the two the heavenly stream<sup>2</sup> of faith flows glorious on with self-control and wisdom, and the three confluent rivers scare away the three afflictions and flow to meet the ocean that is Rāma's very self. The Lake is the Sarayū's source and the Sarayū joins the Gaṅgā; therefore will it purify the hearts of the faithful who hear it. The various stories related here and there are like the groves and gardens on the river banks. The guests at the wedding procession of Umā and Maheśa are like fish, innumerable and of varied kinds; the mirth and merry-making at the birth of Raghubar are the entrancing eddies and ripples on the water. [D. 40.] The childish sports of the four brothers are quantities of lotus buds of many hues; the good deeds of the king and the queen and their family are bees and waterfowl.

[C. 41.] The delightful story of Sitā's marriage-choice<sup>3</sup> enhances the river's captivating charm. All the clever questions are the river-boats and the thoughtful answers the skilful boatmen. The conversation that follows the hearing of the story is the company of travellers who tread the river's banks; the wrath of Bhṛigunāth is the river's strong current, and Rāma's noble words are the firmly fashioned ghāts. The wedding festivities of Rāma and his younger brothers are the river's swelling flood, blessed and bringing joy to all; those who tremble with joyful rapture when they hear or tell of them are men of pious life who gladly bathe therein. The auspicious preparations for Rāma's installation are like the pilgrims who gather to a festival. Kaikeyī's evil counsel is the water-moss,

<sup>1</sup> The three kinds of hearers are said to be: (i) *vīṣayī*, the worldly, of whom there are very many, as in *nagara*; (ii) *mumukṣu*, seekers after release, of whom there are fewer, as in *pura*; (iii) *mukta*, the liberated, of whom there are very few, as in *grāma*.

<sup>2</sup> Gaṅgā.

<sup>3</sup> *svayamvara*: according to the ancient custom, especially among Kaatryiyas, a marriageable maiden chose her husband from among assembled suitors by casting a garland about his neck; sometimes, as in the case of Sitā the choice was made by some competitive ordeal.

and sore trouble is its fruitage. [D. 41.] The acts of Bharat are the sacrifice of prayer, subduing all the countless vices; the sins of which the story tells are the filth in the water and the demerits of the wicked are the cranes and the crows.

[C. 42.] In all six seasons this river of renown is beautiful, at all times very glorious and pure. Śiva's marriage to Himālaya's daughter is the winter; the celebration of the Lord's birthday is the pleasant season of dewy days. The story of Rāma's wedding is that happy and auspicious king of seasons, spring. Rāma's departure to the forest is the intolerable heat of summer, and the tale of his journeying the burning sun and wind. The fierce war with the demons is the season of the rains, a blessing to the gods as rain to the rice-fields. The rule of Rāma—an age of happiness, gentle conduct and greatness—is the fair autumn, pure and pleasant. The story of the virtues of Sitā, that crowning glory of all faithful wives, is the virtue of this water, incomparable, undefiled; the character of Bharat is its refreshing coolness, ever the same and indescribable. [D. 42.] The brotherly affection of the four, their looks, their words, their loving intercourse and laughter, these are the sweetness and the fragrance of the water.

[C. 43.] My woeful state, humility and lowliness are the extreme shallowness of this fair unsullied stream; marvellous is its water, of healing virtue to the hearer, quenching the thirst of desire and cleansing the soul of its impurity. This water confirms true devotion to Rāma and washes away all the sin and sorrow of the Kaliyuga; it drains away the toil of birth and death; it satisfies with the truest satisfaction and overcomes sin and pain and poverty and error. It destroys lust and wrath and pride and ignorance, and encourages sound judgement and detachment. If one reverently bathes in it or drinks of it, sin and affliction are banished from the heart. Those who have not washed their souls in this water are cowards, deceived by these times of evil; wretched creatures are they, like thirsty deer which look on water that is naught but a mirage created by the rays of the sun and turn back disappointed.

[D. 43a.] Reckoning up the virtues of this goodly water and bathing his soul therein, with thoughts fixed on Bhavāni and Śaṅkara, the poet tells the charming story as best he may. [43b.] Now laying the lotus feet of Raghupati on my heart and receiving his gracious aid, I tell of the blessed converse of the two high sages at their meeting.

[C. 44.] Bharadvāja the sage lives at Prayāga, utterly devoted to the feet of Rāma, an ascetic, perfect in self-control, continence and compassion, very expert in the way of spiritual wisdom. In the month of Māgha,<sup>1</sup> when the sun enters the sign of Capricorn, everybody visits Prayāga, the chief place of pilgrimage. Gods and demons, Kinnaras and men all throng reverently to bathe at Trivenī. They worship the lotus feet of Mādhava and rapturously touch the immortal banyan; and there is Bharadvāja's hermitage, exceeding pure, a very pleasant retreat that delights the souls of high sages. There assemble the sages and seers who come to bathe at Prayāga; early in the morning they bathe with joyful zest and hold converse together on Hari's virtues. [D. 44.] They discuss the definition of the Absolute, religious observances and the analysis of elements,<sup>2</sup> and tell of faith in God combined with knowledge and detachment.

[C. 45.] In this manner they bathe during the whole month of Māgha, and then they all return each to his own hermitage. Every year there is great rejoicing, and after bathing when the sun is in Capricorn the companies of sages depart. One day, after bathing throughout the appointed period, all the great sages returned to their retreats; but Bharadvāja clasped the feet of the very wise sage Yājñavalkya and would have him stay. Reverently he washed his lotus feet and set him on a very honourable seat; he worshipped the sage and extolled his glory and thus addressed him in pure and gentle tones: 'Lord, I am troubled by a great doubt, and you hold in your hand all the deep truths of the Veda. I am afraid and ashamed to tell you, but if I do not speak my loss will be great. Lord, there is a saying of the saints, [D. 45.] and the Vedas, the Purāṇas and the sages too affirm it, that if a man hides aught from his *guru*, his soul finds no enlightenment. [C. 46.] This I believe, and so expose my ignorance; dispel it, lord, and be gracious to your servant. Saints, Purāṇas and Upaniṣads have sung of the measureless power of the Name of Rāma. The immortal Śambhu, Śiva, the Blessed Lord, sum of all knowledge and perfection, continually repeats it, and the four kinds of creatures that are in the world win to the highest realm if they die at Kāśi; and that too, O prince of sages, is due to the greatness of Rāma, for Śiva of his compassion

<sup>1</sup> māgha: January-February.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., the Vedānta, the Karma-mimāṃsā and the Sāṃkhya systems of philosophy.

instructs them in the power of the Name. I ask you, lord, which Rāma is this? Tell me and explain, O treasure-house of grace! One Rāma there is, the son of the king of Avadh, and his acts are known to all the world. He suffered untold grief at the loss of his wife, and in his fury slew Rāvan in battle. [D. 46.] Lord, is that the Rāma, or is it some other whose name Tripurāri repeats? You are omniscient and the abode of truth; wisely discriminate and tell me. [C. 47.] Tell me the story at length, my lord, that my grievous perplexity may be resolved.'

Yājñavalkya replied with a smile:

*Yājñavalkya's Story*

You know well enough the sovereign power of Raghupati, for you are Rāma's votary in word and thought and deed. I understand your cunning scheme; you want to hear the deep mysteries of Rāma's perfections and so you have put your questions as though you were completely ignorant. Listen then, my friend, with reverence and attention while I relate the glorious story of Rāma. The story of Rāma is a fearsome Kālikā to slay the giant Mahiṣeśa of deep delusion. The story of Rāma is like the moonbeams, and the saints are the partridges that drink of them. It was just this kind of doubt that Bhavāni felt, and then Mahādeva told her the whole story. [D. 47.] So now I repeat, as well as I can, the converse held by Umā and Śambhu; hear then, O sage, when and why it took place, and so shall you cease to despond.

[C. 48.] One day in the Tretāyuga Śambhu visited Agastya the seer; with him was Sati, Bhavāni, the Mother of the world. The seer bowed down before him, recognizing him as Lord of all. The great sage related the story of Rāma, and Maheśa listened with the utmost delight. Then the seer asked him of perfect faith in Hari, and Śambhu explained it, for he deemed him worthy. The lord of the mountains stayed there for some days, conversing with Agastya about the perfections of Raghupati; then, bidding farewell to the sage, Tripurāri went home with Dakṣa's daughter. At that time Hari became incarnate in the family of Raghu, to relieve earth of her burdens; and at his father's command the immortal god left his kingdom and wandered as an ascetic in the Dandaka forest. [D. 48a.] Hara kept on considering how he might come to see him; for the Lord, he thought, had become incarnate secretly, and if he went to see him, everyone would guess the truth. [S. 48b.]

Śāṅkara's heart was much disturbed, but Sati knew not the mystery; he longed to see Rāma, but though his eyes were greedy for the sight, his soul was afraid.

[C. 49.] 'Rāvan', he thought, 'has asked the boon of death at the hand of man, and the Lord wishes to bring Brahmā's word to fulfilment. If I do not go to see him, I shall regret it.' But all his thoughts and plans were of no avail. While Śiva was thus anxiously pondering, the Ten-headed went forth, taking with him the base demon Mārīca, who straightway disguised himself as a deer. Besotted Rāvan practised guile and carried off the princess of Videha; for he knew not the extent of the power of the Lord. Hari slew the deer and returned with his brother, and when he saw the empty hermitage, his eyes filled with tears. Raghurāi was distraught by his loss as a mortal man might be, and the two brothers wandered through the forest searching for Sītā. In him who had never known union or separation was manifested the grief of bereavement.

[D. 49.] Very marvellous are the acts of Raghupati; only the supremely wise understand them. Those who are dull of wit and under the dominion of illusion fancy something quite different.

[C. 50.] It was at that time that Śambhu saw Rāma, and his soul was enraptured. He gazed his fill on the ocean of beauty, but thinking it no fit occasion, he did not make himself known, but Love's destroyer went his way, crying, 'Victory to True Being, Consciousness and Bliss, that purifies the world!' So Śiva, Lord of grace, departed with Sati, trembling again and again with ecstatic emotion. When Sati saw Śambhu's state, a great doubt arose in her mind. 'Śāṅkara', she thought, 'is Lord of the world and worthy of all men's worship; gods, men and sages all bow the head before him. Yet he did obeisance to a prince, calling him True Being, Consciousness and Bliss, and Spirit Supreme; and when he saw his beauty, he was so absorbed in it that even now nothing can check his devotion. [D. 50.] Can the Absolute, which is all-pervading, passionless, unborn, indivisible, desireless, without parts—that which even the Veda knows not—take bodily form as a man? And even if Viṣṇu should take human form for the sake of the gods, [C. 51.] yet is he omniscient like Tripurāri; then how should he, in whom all wisdom dwells, the lord of Śri, the foe of demons, be searching for his wife as though he lacked knowledge? Yet again, the word of Śambhu cannot be untrue, for all know Śiva is omniscient.'

Such was the deep doubt that troubled her mind and her heart could find no solution. Though Bhavāni said nothing openly, yet Hara who knows the secrets of all hearts could read her thoughts. 'Hearken, Sati,' he said; 'you are just like a woman; such doubts should never lodge in your heart. He whose story the seer Agastya told, and faith in whom I taught the sage, is my own chosen deity, Raghbir, whom steadfast sages ever reverence. [Ch. 2.] He whom steadfast sages, ascetics and adepts continually contemplate with unsullied soul, he whose fame Vedas and Purāṇas and Agamas sing, naming him "Not thus", that very Rāma, all-pervading Absolute, Lord of all the worlds and master of illusion, has come to earth to save his faithful people, ever self-subsisting, jewel of the house of Raghu.'

[S. 51.] Though Śiva declared this many times, his teaching took no hold upon her heart. Then Maheśa, knowing full well the might of Hari's illusive power, said with a smile, [C. 52.] 'If you feel such doubt, why do you not go and put the matter to the test? I will stay here, sitting in the banyan's shade till you come back to me. Do your best to be rid of your grievous ignorance and error, but act with circumspection.'

Sati went off at Śiva's bidding, considering how she should act, while Śainbhu thought to himself, 'Dakṣa's daughter will come to no good. If her doubt is not dispelled by all that I could say, then fate is adverse and ill will come of it. As Rāma has decreed so shall it be; then why make a long argument about it?' So saying, he began to repeat the name of Hari.

[D. 52.] But Sati approached the Lord, the abode of bliss. After pondering her course again and again, she took the form of Sitā and went forward on that road by which the king of men was coming. [C. 53.] When Lakṣman saw the guise that Umā had assumed, he was astonished and dumbfounded; in his profound perplexity he could say nothing; steadfast of soul, he knew the power of the Lord.<sup>1</sup> The Lord of heaven penetrated Sati's disguise, for he sees all and knows the secrets of all hearts. He, by the very thought of whom ignorance is destroyed, is that omniscient Rāma, the Blessed Lord.

Now see what a woman's nature can make her do! Even in his presence Sati would hide her guile! But Rāma, realizing the

<sup>1</sup> This is explained as meaning that Lakṣman could not penetrate the secret, but waited for Rāma himself to see her and explain her appearance.

might of his own illusive power, addressed her with a smile in gentle tones. The Lord greeted her with folded hands and told her his name and the name of his father, and then said, 'Where is he on whose banner is blazoned the bull? Why are you roaming the forest alone?'

[D. 53.] When she heard Rāma's words, so gentle but so full of meaning, she was utterly ashamed; awe-struck, Sati returned to Maheśa with anxious heart. [C. 54.] 'I paid no heed to Śāṅkara's word, but brought my folly to the notice of Rāma; and now what answer am I to give?' Her heart's distress was a consuming fire. Rāma knew that Sati was in distress and showed forth his power in part. As Sati went on her way, she beheld a marvel. In front of her was Rāma, with Sītā and his brother. She looked behind her and saw the Lord with his brother and Sītā in beauteous raiment. Wherever she looked, there was the Lord upon his throne, and adepts and learned sages were doing him reverence. She saw, too, many a Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, each surpassing the rest in measureless majesty; and all the gods she saw in various forms serving the Lord and doing homage to his feet. [D. 54.] Satis, Sarasavatis and Lakṣmīs she saw, innumerable and marvellous, each in a form to match the form of Brahmā and the other gods. [C. 55.] As many Raghupatis as she saw on this side and on that, so many were the forms of all the gods with their consorts. She beheld, too, all the creatures, moving and unmoved, the world contains, in their various kinds. The gods in many forms were worshipping the Lord; but nowhere did she see the form of Rāma other than his own. Many a Raghupati and Sītā she saw, but always their forms were the same—the same Raghubar, the same Lakṣman, the same Sītā. Sati was terrified at the sight; with beating heart she lost all consciousness; she closed her eyes and sank down on the road. When she opened her eyes again and looked, Dakṣa's daughter saw nothing there; again and again she bowed her head before Rāma's feet and went on to where the mountain lord awaited her.

[D. 55.] When she drew nigh to Maheśa, he smiled and asked her how she had fared. 'How did you put him to the test?' he said. 'Tell me truly all you did.'

[C. 56.] Sati thought of the power of Raghubir and for very fear concealed the truth from Śiva. 'Husband,' she said, 'I made no trial of him, but like yourself I greeted him with reverence. I was perfectly sure that what you said must be true.'

Then Śāṅkara perceived the truth by contemplation and knew all that Sati had done; he bowed his head before Rāma's illusive power by whose impulse Sati had been caused to utter falsehood. 'What Hari wills is destiny invincible,' thought all-wise Śambhu in his heart; 'Sati took the form of Sītā,' Śiva reflected in deep despondency; 'if now I treat Sati with a husband's love, the faith I follow will be lost and I shall be committing sin. [D. 56.] Sati is utterly pure and I cannot desert her; yet it were great sin to show my love.' Maheśa said nothing openly, but in his heart was grievous pain.

[C. 57.] Then Śāṅkara bowed his head before the feet of the Lord, and as soon as he thought on Rāma, he made this resolve: 'I will not touch Sati in the body she now wears.' So Śiva determined, and, constant to his vow, Śāṅkara went home with his thoughts on Raghubir; and as he went, a triumphant cry sounded from heaven: 'Victory to Maheśa! Firmly hast thou upheld the faith! Who but thou, Rāma's votary, the Blessed Lord, could make a vow like this?'

Sati was troubled when she heard the voice from heaven, and hesitantly asked Śiva, 'Tell me, Lord of grace, home of truth and compassionate, what is this vow that you have made?' But though Sati questioned him again and again, Tripurāri told her nothing.

[D. 57a.] Sati guessed that the omniscient knew all she had done. 'I have deceived Śambhu,' she thought, 'like a stupid, foolish woman!' [S. 57b.] Water mixed with milk is sold as milk, and, see, it is just the same with love. Let the acid of deceit fall into it and the two are separated and the taste is spoilt.'

[C. 58.] As she dwelt on what she had done, her heart was torn with grief inexpressible and boundless anxiety. 'Śiva,' she thought, 'is an ocean of grace, but an ocean no man can fathom, and that is why he has not spoken openly of my fault.' Bhavāni read Śāṅkara's thoughts in his face, and realizing that her lord had abandoned her, was bitterly distressed. When she thought of her sin, she could say nothing, but her heart was a fiery furnace. When Śiva perceived that Sati was sorrowful, he told her charming stories to comfort her; and thus recounting various legends on the way, Viśvanāth arrived at Kailāsa. Then Śambhu, remembering his vow, sat beneath a banyan in the lotus-posture of meditation,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *kamalāsana*, or *padmāsana*, is an ascetic posture of contemplation, with the thighs crossed, one hand resting on the left thigh, the other held up with the thumb on the heart, and the eyes directed to the tip of the nose.

and practising complete self-control, Śāṅkara fell into an endless, unbroken trance.

[D. 58.] Meanwhile, Sati dwelt in Kailāsa and great was her grief; no one knew aught of her secret; every day seemed like an age in the passing. [C. 59.] Ever in Sati's heart was the burden of a fresh sorrow: 'When shall I traverse this ocean of pain? I who slighted Raghupati and held my husband's word to be untrue! God has punished me as I deserve and all that he has done is fitting; but now, O God, think it not right to preserve my life when I am at variance with Śāṅkara!' No tongue could tell her heart's despair, but wisely she thought on Rāma and said, 'Lord, if thou art said to pity the humble, and the Vedas have proclaimed thy glory as one who relieves distress, then with folded hands I make my prayer that this body of mine be speedily put off. If I truly love the feet of Śiva, and my wifely vow is true in thought and word and deed, then hear me, O all-seeing Lord, [D. 59.] and soon devise some means whereby I may die and so with ease be rid of this intolerable woe.'

[C. 60.] So sorrowed Prajāpati's daughter; heavy and grievous was her unspeakable anguish. Eighty-seven thousand years passed by and the immortal Śambhu awoke from his trance. When Śiva began to repeat the name of Rāma, Sati perceived that the Lord of the world was awake and went and did homage to Śambhu's feet. Śāṅkara seated her before him and began to recite the romantic stories of Hari.

At that time Dakṣa was Prajāpati. Brahmā saw and considered him to be in all ways worthy and made Dakṣa chief of the Lords of creation. When Dakṣa was invested with such high office, he became exceeding arrogant; never was a man born into the world whom dominion did not intoxicate. [D. 60.] Dakṣa called all the sages together and they began to prepare a great sacrifice; he respectfully invited all the gods who receive a portion of the sacrificial feast. [C. 61.] Kinnaras, serpents, adepts and Gandharvas, and all the gods with their wives came to the sacrifice; all the gods, except Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Maheśa, made ready their chariots and came. Sati saw the various beautiful chariots passing through the sky, while celestial nymphs sang songs so sweet that their melody would disturb the meditations of a saint. Then she questioned Śiva, and he explained what it meant. When she heard of the sacrifice her father had decreed, she was somewhat gladdened and thought, 'If Maheśa grant me permission, I will

make it an excuse for going to stay there for a few days.' But because she was still sore grieving that her husband had abandoned her, and remembered her sin, she spoke no word; but at last in persuasive tones, full of awe and embarrassment and affection, Sati said, [D. 61.] 'There is a great festival at my father's house; if my lord be graciously pleased to allow me, I will go to attend it, as in duty bound.'

[C. 62.] 'It is well,' said Śiva, 'and it would please me too, but it is scarce fitting, for he has not invited you. Dakṣa has summoned all his daughters, but because of his quarrel with me he has left you out. Once he was displeased with me in Brahmā's court and that is why he slighted me to this day. If, Bhavāni, you go without being invited, you will lose all self-respect, affection and honour. Though one may certainly go uninvited to the house of a friend, a master, a father or a *guru*, it is not well to visit one who bears a grudge.' With many arguments Śambhu warned her, but she would not be advised, for she was under the dominion of fate. 'If you go,' said the Lord, 'without being asked, in my opinion it will not be well.' [D. 62.] Thus Hara did all he could to dissuade her, but when Dakṣa's daughter would not be stayed, Tripurāri gave her his chief officers as an escort and bade her farewell.

[C. 63.] When Bhavāni reached her father's house, no one welcomed her for fear of Dakṣa. Only her mother received her kindly; her sisters met her with derisive smiles. Dakṣa never even asked her how she fared, and when he saw Sati, he was consumed with fury. Then Sati went and looked at the sacrifice and nowhere saw any portion offered to Śambhu. Then she recalled what Śāmkara had said, and when she realized the insult offered to her lord, she so burned with rage that the grief she had formerly experienced was nothing like this overwhelming pain. There are many kinds of anguish in the world, but none so grievous as an insult to one's family. So Sati thought and was infuriated; though her mother did all she could to placate her, [D. 63.] she could not bear the slight put upon Śiva and would not be appeased. Then she vehemently challenged the whole company of guests and cried in wrath, [C. 64.] 'Hear, all you guests and mighty sages, who have planned together this insult to Śāmkara! Right soon shall each one of you reap the fruit of it, and my father too shall dearly rue the day! Wherever blasphemy is heard, spoken against the saints or Śambhu or Lakṣmi's lord, there it is ordained that, if it be possible, the blasphemer's tongue should be cut out, or if not, that one should

close one's ears and run away. Maheśa, the demon's foe, Father of the world and friend of all, is the Universal Spirit; he it is whom my senseless father is insulting, and this body of mine is begotten of Dakṣa's seed; therefore laying on my heart him who bears the moon upon his brow and the bull upon his banner, I shall forthwith abandon it!' So saying, she consumed her body in the sacrificial fire, and a cry of lamentation arose throughout the hall of sacrifice. [D. 64.] When Śambhu's henchmen heard of Sati's death, they began to destroy the oblations; but when the high sage Bhṛigu saw the sacrifice being destroyed, he preserved it.

[C. 65.] When Śāmkara heard all these tidings, he was wroth and dispatched Virabhadra, who went and utterly destroyed the sacrificial offerings and punished all the gods as they deserved. All the world knows the fate of Dakṣa, a fate that all Śambhu's enemies must meet; everybody knows this story, and so I have told it in brief.

As she was dying, Sati asked a boon of Hari, that in all her future lives she might be devoted to Śiva's feet. That is why she entered the house of Himalaya and was born again as Pārvati. From the time when Umā came to the house of the Mountain King, the place enjoyed perfect prosperity and success; all about it hermits made charming retreats, and the monarch of the mountains granted them fit places to dwell in. [D. 65.] On that fair mountain all the trees, flourishing in their various kinds, bore never-failing flowers and fruits, and mines disclosed their manifold precious gems. [C. 66.] Pellucid water flowed in all the streams, and all the birds and beasts and bees were happy; all creatures laid aside their natural enmities, and dwelt upon the mountain in mutual love. Girijā's entrance to the house made the mountain as glad as a votary when he wins to faith in Rāma. In the king's palace was ever some new festivity, and Brahmā and all the gods sang his glory.

When Nārada heard all these tidings, he betook himself to the home of the Mountain King to see the festive scene. The king received him with great respect, bathed his feet and set him on an honourable seat. He and his wife bowed their heads before the sage's feet and sprinkled the whole palace with the water in which his feet had been washed. The king spoke much of his good fortune, and sending for his daughter, set her before the sage's feet.

[D. 66.] 'O noble sage,' he said, 'you know all times and all there is to know; there is no quarter of the universe you have not visited; reflect and tell me my daughter's faults and virtues.'

[C. 67.] Smiling, the sage replied in gentle and mysterious tones, 'Your daughter is a mine of all the virtues; she is beautiful, good-natured and clever, and her names are Umā, Ambikā and Bhavāni. The maiden is rich in all the marks of character and fortune; she will ever be dear to her husband. Her wedded happiness will always be secure, and she will bring renown to her father and mother. She shall be held worthy of worship in all the world, and men by serving her shall gain all they desire; and dwelling on her name, the women of this world shall tread the path of wifely faithfulness, narrow as the edge of a sword. These, O king, are your daughter's fair fortunes, but hear now two or three defects. One without merit or dignity, without father or mother, an ascetic, indifferent to all, an anchorite with matted hair, [D. 67.] who has abandoned all desire, naked, in inauspicious guise—such a one will be her husband; thus is it written on her hand.'

[C. 68.] When they heard the sage's words and knew well they must be true, her parents were sad, but Umā rejoiced. Not even Nārada could guess the secret, for all showed the same emotion, though their feelings were so different. Girijā and all her maidens, Himālaya and Mainā, were trembling and their eyes were filled with tears. Umā laid up Nārada's words in her heart, for she knew that what the divine seer said could not be untrue. Her love for Śiva's lotus feet revived, but she feared it would be difficult to find him. Thinking the time was not fitting to speak of it, she concealed her love and went back to her seat close by her hand-maiden. Her parents and the wise damsels were sad, for they knew the divine seer's prophecy must be fulfilled. Then the Mountain King composed himself and said, 'Tell me, my lord, what can be done to avert it ?'

[D. 68.] The great sage said, 'Hearken, O Himavān! What fate has written on the forehead no god or demon, man, serpent or sage is able to delete. [C. 69.] Yet I declare one means of avoidance which, if heaven help, may avail. Umā will surely wed just such a husband as I described to you; but all the demerits I mentioned in the bridegroom are, so I hold, to be found in Śiva. If she be married to Śamkara, everyone will regard even those faults as virtues. Though Hari sleeps upon a serpent as his couch, the wise account it no fault in him; the sun and fire devour all sorts of food, but no one blames them for it. Though both pure and impure water flow in the Gāngā, no one calls the river foul. The powerful, sire, can do no wrong, like the sun and the fire and the Gāngā. But

if any stupid man, wise in his own conceits, would do as they do, [D. 69.] he falls into hell and stays there for an aeon. Can the creature be compared to God?

[C. 70.] 'Saints never taste wine, even though they know it is made with Gaṅgā's water; but the wine, if mixed with the Gaṅgā, becomes pure; and such is the distinction between God and the soul.<sup>1</sup> Śambhu is omnipotent, the Blessed Lord, and nought but blessing can come of this union. Maheśa is not easily propitiated; yet the practice of austerity will quickly appease him. If your daughter practise penance, Tripurāri is able to annul her destiny; of all the bridegrooms in the world Śiva alone, none other, is fit mate for her. It is he who grants boons and relieves the distress of the suppliant; he is an ocean of grace, delighting the souls of his servants. The desired reward cannot be won by a myriad austerties and prayers unless one propitiates Śiva.'

[D. 70.] So spoke Nārada and, fixing his thoughts on Hari, gave Girijā his blessing. 'O Mountain King,' he said, 'doubt no more; all will be well.'

[C. 71.] With these words the sage departed to Brahmā's realm. Now hear what happened after that. When Mainā was alone with her husband, she said, 'My lord, I did not understand what the sage meant. If the bridegroom and his house and family be noble and a match for our daughter, then arrange the marriage; but if not, even should the girl remain unwed—husband, Umā is as dear to me as life itself! If Girijā finds not a worthy spouse, then everyone will call the king an utter fool! Bear this in mind, my husband, and so arrange a marriage that later there may be nothing to regret.' So saying, she fell down with her head at his feet. The Mountain King affectionately replied, 'As soon shall fire break out in the moon as Nārada's word prove false! [D. 71.] Lay aside all care, beloved, and think on the Lord God. He who created Pārvati will bring all to good effect. [C. 72.] Now if you love your daughter, go and advise her to do such penance as will win her Maheśa; in no other way will sorrow be eased. Nārada's words are pregnant and of deep meaning; he on whose banner is blazoned the bull is a treasure-house of all fair virtues. Realize this and lay aside all doubt; Śankara is altogether blameless.'

When she heard her husband's words, she cheerfully arose and went at once to Girijā. When she saw Umā, her eyes filled with

<sup>1</sup> As long as the soul is in the body, it cannot be identified with God; but if it be absorbed in the Absolute, it is purified and made one with God.

tears and she lovingly took her in her lap and clasped her to her bosom again and again; emotion checked her utterance. Then the omniscient Mother of the world, Bhavāni, spoke gentle words that comforted her mother:

[D. 72.] 'Hearken, mother, while I tell you of a dream I dreamed. A handsome and noble Brāhmaṇa, fair of hue, thus instructed me: 'Go, daughter of the Mountain King, and practise penance. [C. 73.] Be assured that what Nārada said is true; moreover, it is your parents' pleasure; penance brings joy and puts an end to pain and sin. By the power of penance God creates the world; by the power of penance Viṣṇu preserves it; by the power of penance Śambhu destroys it; by the power of penance Śeṣa supports the burden of the earth. The whole creation, Bhavāni, has penance for its stay; understand this fully, and go and do penance.'

When she heard this dream, her mother was astonished. She called the king and told him of it. Umā said all she could to comfort her father and mother and then gladly went away to practise penance. Her beloved parents and their household were all distraught and could say no word.

[D. 73.] Then Vedaśirā the sage came and explained the matter to them all, and when they heard of Pārvatī's greatness, they were comforted.

[C. 74.] Umā laid on her heart the feet of the lord of her life, and went to the forest and began to practise penance. Her delicate frame was not made for penance, yet she thought on the feet of her lord and abandoned all delights. Day by day her devotion to his feet was renewed; absorbed in penance, she took no heed of her body. For a thousand years she ate roots and fruit, and then she spent a hundred years living on vegetables. For some days she fed on water and air and for some days she kept strict fast. Then for three thousand years she ate dry leaves that fell to the ground from the *bela*.<sup>1</sup> Then she gave up eating even the dry leaves, and so Umā was called the 'leafless'. When Brahmā saw that Umā's body was emaciated by penance, his solemn tones were heard in heaven: [D. 74.] 'Hearken, daughter of the king of the mountains! Your desire has borne fair fruit. Abandon altogether this severe penance; Tripurāri will now be yours! [C. 75.] Many anchorites have there been, constant and wise,

<sup>1</sup> The *bela*, or wood-apple, *Aegle marmelos*, is specially sacred to Śiva.

but not one, Bhavāni, has practised such austerities as these. Now lay up in your heart this sure word of Brahmā, knowing it to be ever true and eternally holy. As soon as your father comes to summon you, be not stubborn but go home; and when the Seven Seers meet you, then know that this word from heaven is to be proved true.' When she heard Brahmā's voice sounding from heaven, Girijā felt a thrill of joy.

I have told the beautiful story of Umā; now hear the glorious acts of Śambhu. From the time that Sati went away and quitted her body, Śiva became a detached ascetic. He continually repeated the name of Raghunāyak, and in this place and in that listened to the tale of Rāma's virtues. [D. 75.] Śiva, Consciousness and Bliss, the home of joy, divorced from ignorance and pride and lust, roamed the earth with thoughts fixed on Hari, source of pure delight to all the world.

[C. 76.] Here he taught sages wisdom, and there he recited the virtues of Rāma. Though free from desire, yet the all-wise god grieved for the loss of his faithful wife. In this way a long time passed while his love for the feet of Rāma ever grew greater. When he saw Śāṅkara's strict rule of life and devotion, and that nothing could move him from his heart-felt faith, Rāma, who is grateful and gracious, beautiful and full of loving-kindness, manifested himself in his great glory. He gave all praise to Śāṅkara, saying, 'Who else could accomplish such a vow?' Rāma told Śiva all that had occurred; he told him of Pārvati's birth, and graciously declared in detail Girijā's exceeding holy deeds. [D. 76.] 'Now, Śiva,' he said, 'if you truly love me, hearken to my prayer; grant this my request, and go and wed the daughter of the Mountain King.'

[C. 77.] 'Though this be not fitting,' said Śiva, 'yet a master's request cannot be refused. Lord, this is my highest duty, obediently to do your will. One should approve and act on the word of a mother or father or *guru* or master without a moment's thought. In every way you wish me well; so, Lord, I obey your command.'

The Lord was well content when he heard Śāṅkara's words, devoted, wise and dutiful, and said, 'Hara, your vow has been accomplished; now remember what I have said.' With these words he vanished, and Śāṅkara laid up in his heart the vision of his form.

Then the Seven Seers<sup>1</sup> came to Śiva, and the Lord addressed them courteously; [D. 77.] 'Go ye to Pārvati and test her love; then send Himālaya and have her brought home and remove her doubts.'

[C. 78.] When the Seers saw Gauri there, she seemed to them to be Austerity herself. The sages said, 'Hearken, mountain maiden! Why are you practising this severe penance? Whom are you propitiating? What is it you desire? Why not tell us the true purpose of your heart?'

'I am too deeply ashamed to tell you,' she replied; 'you will laugh at my folly when you hear it. My soul is stubborn and heeds not advice, but would build a wall on water. I believe Nārada's words to be true and would fly without wings! Now mark, O sages, my senseless folly; I ever long for Śiva as my husband!'

[D. 78.] When they heard her words, the Seers laughed and said, 'Truly you are a daughter of the mountain! Tell me, who ever listened to Nārada's instructions and had a home to live in?'

[C. 79.] He gave advice to Dakṣa's sons and they never saw their home again; he ruined Citraketu's house, and did the same to Hiranyakasipu. Any man or woman who listens to Nārada's advice is sure to leave home and become a beggar. To all appearance he is good and noble, but inwardly he is full of guile, and he wants to make everyone like himself. Such is he on whose word you rely when you long to wed an inveterate ascetic, vicious and shameless, of hideous guise, wearing a necklace of human skulls and snakes about his body, naked, without family or home! Tell me, what happiness will be yours if you do win such a husband? You have been thoroughly deceived by that swindler's allurements! Śiva only married Sati to satisfy public opinion, and then deserted her and brought about her death! [D. 79.] Now Śiva sleeps at ease without a care and eats the food of beggary. Can women ever dwell in the homes of nature's solitaries?

[C. 80.] 'Now heed what we have to say. We have chosen a good husband for you, very handsome and pure and pleasant and good-natured, whose glory and mysterious acts the Vedas hymn. Faultless is he and the perfection of virtue, Lakṣmi's lord, who

<sup>1</sup> According to the *Mahābhārata* the *saptarṣi*, or seven great seers, are Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulasta, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasiṣṭha, the seven principal stars in the constellation of the Great Bear. A different list is given in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

dwells in the city of Vaikuntha. Such is the husband we shall bring to make him yours.'

When Bhavāni heard this, she smiled and said, 'You spoke truly when you called me daughter of the mountain! Perish my life, but not my stubbornness! Gold, too, comes from the rock, but for no amount of burning does it abandon its natural quality. I shall not discredit Nārada's word; whether my house be established or ruined, I am not afraid; he who mistrusts his *guru*'s words can never hope to win happiness or success. [D. 80.] Mahādeva may be full of faults and Viṣṇu the abode of every virtue; but the heart's concern is with him in whom it delights.

[C. 81.] 'If I had met you earlier, great sages, I should have listened to your advice and obeyed you; but now that I have vowed my life to Śambhu, how can I weigh his faults and virtues? If you are so very persistent and cannot be content without arranging a betrothal, there are plenty of young men and maidens in the world, and sportive match-makers need not be idle. But, be it for ten million lives, this is my firm intention, either to marry Śambhu or to remain a virgin. I will not turn a deaf ear to Nārada's counsel, though Maheśa himself bid me do so a hundred times! I fall at your feet,' said the Mother of the world, 'and beseech you to go home, for it is late.'

When the sages beheld her love, they cried, 'Glory, glory to Bhavāni, Mother of the world! [D. 81.] You are Māyā and Śiva is the Blessed Lord, Mother and Father of the whole world!' Then the sages bowed their heads before her feet and departed in an ecstasy of rapture.

[C. 82.] The sages went and sent Himālaya, who besought Girijā to return and brought her home. Then the Seven Seers went to Śiva and told him all that Umā had said. Śiva was entranced when he heard of her love, and the Seven Seers went home rejoicing, while the all-wise Śambhu began with steady concentration to meditate on Raghunāyak.

Now at that time there was a demon, Tāraka, of tremendous strength of arm and might and energy. He vanquished all the spheres and the lords of the spheres, so that the gods were robbed of happiness and wealth. He grew not old, nor could he die; he was invincible. The gods fought many a battle and were defeated. Then they went and cried to the Creator; and when Brahmā saw that all the gods were in distress, he comforted them and said, [D. 82.] 'The demon will die when a son is born of the seed of

Śambhu; it is he that shall conquer him in battle. [C. 83.] Hear what I say and make a plan; if God lend his aid, it will succeed. Satī, who abandoned her body at Dakṣa's sacrifice, has taken birth in the house of Himālaya. She has practised penance to win Śambhu for a husband, but Śiva has left all and sits in a trance. Though there be grave doubt about the issue, listen to what I suggest. Go and send Kāma to Śiva to disturb Śaṅkara's contemplation. After that, I shall go and bow the head to Śiva and persuade him with all the force at my command to wed her. That is the only way to help the gods.'

The gods all approved of the suggestion and heartily applauded it. Then appeared the god with the five arrows and the banner of the fish. [D. 83.] The gods explained all their troubles, and when he heard them, Māra pondered and said with a smile, 'To quarrel with Śambhu spells danger for me! [C. 84.] However, I will do what you ask, for the scriptures say that one's highest duty is service, and he who gives his life for another's weal is ever commended by the saints.' With these words he bowed to them all and went off, bearing in his hand his bow of flowers and taking his attendants to help him; and as he went, Māra thought to himself, 'To oppose Śiva means certain death for me!'

Then he spread abroad his influence and made the whole world subject to his power; and as soon as Kāmadeva grew angry, all scriptural bounds were in a moment abolished. Continence, vows, all kinds of self-control, patience, duty, mystic wisdom and knowledge, right conduct, prayer, austerity and detachment—the whole army of sound judgement took to flight in terror.

[Ch. 3.] Fled wisdom with her allies, and on the field of battle her warriors turned to flee, then went and hid themselves in the sacred books, as in mountain-caves. In all the world arose a turmoil: 'What is going to happen, O Creator? Who will protect us? Who is it has two heads<sup>1</sup> whom Rati's lord is threatening in wrath, with bow and arrows in hand?'

[D. 84.] All creatures in the world, moving and unmoved, called male or female, overstepped the limits of their nature and fell subject to Love. [C. 85.] In the hearts of all was a yearning for Love; the boughs of the trees saw the creepers and bent down towards them; the rivers swelled and ran to meet the sea; ponds and lakes met in union. When such was the state of inanimate

<sup>1</sup> And can therefore afford to lose one.

creation, who can describe the acts of conscious beings? Beasts on the land and birds in the air and fish in the water paid no heed to time and season but gave themselves up to love. All were blind and restless with passion; the *cakavā*<sup>1</sup> and his mate regarded neither night nor day. Of gods and demons, men, Kinnaras and serpents, sprites and goblins and ghosts and vampires I make no special mention, for these are ever slaves to love; but even adepts and anchorites, great sages and ascetics, under Love's influence forgot their austere vows.

[Ch. 4.] When great ascetics and hermits were subdued by Love, why speak of baser men? The wise, who used to see the whole created world as Brahmā, now saw it as Woman. Women saw the world as Man, and men as Woman. So for an hour this sportive mystery, fashioned by Kāma, prevailed within the universe.

[S. 85.] All lost their self-control, for Love had stolen their hearts; at that time only those escaped whom Raghubir protected.

[C. 86.] This strange experience lasted for an hour until Kāma approached Śambhu. At the sight of Siva Love was afraid, and the whole world regained its former state. At once all creatures were at peace, like drunkards when they cease from their drunkenness. When Kāma looked on Rudra, the invincible and inaccessible, the Blessed Lord, he was frightened; he was ashamed to retreat, yet could do nothing. He made up his mind to die, and devised a plan; forthwith charming spring, king of seasons, was revealed, and fresh young trees in rows sprang into lovely blossom. Forest and grove, pond and lake, in every quarter took on a wondrous beauty, as though passion were everywhere outpoured; and at the sight Love woke to life, even in dead souls.

[Ch. 5.] Even in dead souls Love woke to life; no tongue can tell the beauty of the woods. Cool, mild and fragrant winds that fan Love's flame began to blow; many a lotus opened on the lakes, where swarms of bees hummed sweetly; swans, cuckoos and parrots made melodious song and Apsarās sang and danced.

[D. 86.] But though Love practised all his arts in a myriad ways, he and his army were defeated. Śiva's trance was undisturbed, and Love waxed wroth. [C. 87.] Spying the strong branch of

<sup>1</sup> *koka*, or *cakavā*: the ruddy sheldrake, *Casarca ferruginea*. The *cakavā* and *cakavī* are very fond of one another, but are destined always to be separated at night and to spend the hours of darkness calling to one another from the opposite banks of a river.

a mango tree, Kāma climbed up on it in a rage. He fitted his arrows to his bow of flowers, and angrily taking aim drew the bowstring to his ear. He shot his five arrows and they lodged in Śiva's breast; his trance was broken then and he awoke. The Lord's soul was much disturbed; he opened his eyes and looked in all directions. When he saw Kāma hidden among the mango leaves, he grew so angry that the three spheres trembled. Then Śiva opened his third eye, and as soon as it looked on Kāma, he was burnt to ashes.

A grievous cry of lamentation went up throughout the world; the gods were afraid but the demons were glad. The sensual were sad when they thought on the delights of love, but aspirant ascetics were relieved.

[Ch. 6.] Ascetics were relieved, but Rati fell fainting when she heard of her husband's fate. Weeping and wailing with many a piteous lament, she went to Śaṅkara. She stood before him with folded hands and earnestly besought him to relent. Śiva, the gracious Lord, whose wrath is soon appeased, looked on the helpless woman and spoke a word of comfort:

[D. 87.] 'Henceforth, Rati, your husband shall be called the Bodiless; and bodiless he shall pervade all beings. Now hear how you shall meet him again. [C. 88.] When Kṛiṣṇa shall take birth in the family of Yadu to relieve earth of her heavy burden, your husband shall be born as Kṛiṣṇa's son; my words shall not prove false.' When Rati heard Śaṅkara's words, she departed.

And now I tell you what happened next. When the gods heard all these tidings, they went together to Vaikuntha, and with Viṣṇu and Brahmā drew near to Śiva, the gracious Lord. Each severally praised him, and he who bears the moon upon his brow was pleased. Said the ocean of grace, on whose banner is blazoned the bull, 'Tell me, immortals, why you have come.'

'Lord,' said Brahmā, 'you know the thoughts of every heart, yet, master, devotion impels me to make my prayer. [D. 88.] In the hearts of all the gods, O Śaṅkara, is this one earnest desire; Lord, we long to see with our own eyes your marriage rites performed. [C. 89.] O subduer of Love's pride, so act that we may feast our eyes on this glad ceremony! O ocean of grace, it was a kindly deed to grant a boon to Rati after burning up Kāma. Lord, it is the nature of the great to show mercy after punishment. Pārvatī has performed an endless penance; now take her to yourself.'

When he heard Brahmā's petition and remembered the words of the Lord, Śiva was content and said, 'So let it be!' Then the gods beat their drums and rained down flowers and cried, 'Glory, glory to the Lord of heaven!' Then judging it to be the proper time, the Seven Seers came and Brahmā at once sent them to the palace of the Mountain King; and first they approached Bhavāni and spoke to her soft words, full of guile: [D. 89.] 'Last time you would not heed our words but only Nārada's advice; now your vow has proved vain, for Maheśa has burnt up Kāma!'

[C. 90.] When she heard this, Bhavāni smiled and said, 'True indeed, wise sages! You imagine that Śambhu has only now burnt up Kāma and until this day has been a prey to desire. But I believe that Śiva has always been an ascetic, unborn, irreproachable, free from lust and sensual desire; and if in this belief I have offered Śiva my loving service, in thought and word and deed, then hearken, high sages! The gracious Lord will bring my vow to true fruition. When you said that Hara had burnt up Kāma, you were displaying profound ignorance. Fire, my good sirs, is of such a nature that snow can never approach it; if it comes near it, it is sure to be destroyed; and so it is with Kāma and Maheśa.'

[D. 90.] Right glad were the sages when they heard her words and marked her love and trust. They bowed the head to Bhavāni and went to Himālaya.

[C. 91.] They told the king of the mountains the whole story. He was very sad when he heard that Kāma had been burnt, but when they told him of the boon granted to Rati, Himālaya took comfort. Thinking on Śambhu's sovereign power, he summoned the great sages with reverence, and asking them to choose an auspicious day and planet and hour, soon fixed a date for the wedding according to Vedic rule. He then gave the horoscope to the Seven Seers and clasping their feet besought them to be gracious. They went and gave the horoscope to Brahmā, and when he read it he could not contain himself for loving joy. Brahmā read out the appointed date to all, and all the sages and assembled gods rejoiced. Flowers rained down from heaven and music sounded, and in every quarter festive vessels<sup>1</sup> were prepared. [D. 91.] All the gods made ready their various steeds and chariots; fair and auspicious omens were seen and Apsarās sang their songs.

<sup>1</sup> Vessels in which lights are placed, and which at a wedding are held on the head by women whose husbands are alive and shown to the bride at the door of her house.

[C. 92.] Śambhu's attendants dressed him for the wedding; on his knot of matted hair they set a marriage-crown of snakes. Serpents were the earrings and bracelets he wore, with ash-smeared body and lion-skin for dress. The moon was on his noble forehead and Gaṅgā on his head; three eyes he had, his sacred thread a snake. Poison was on his throat and on his breast a necklace of human heads; a gracious home of blessing in unblest guise! And there were the trident and the tabor glorious in his hand; he rode upon a bull to the sound of music. When they saw Śiva, the gods' wives smiled. 'Nowhere in the world,' they said, 'is a bride to match this groom!' Viṣṇu and Brahmā and all the other gods mounted their several vehicles and joined the marriage procession. Naught could equal the splendour of the company of gods, yet the procession was not worthy of the bridegroom!

[D. 92.] Then Viṣṇu summoned all the guardians of the quarters<sup>1</sup> and said with a smile, 'Do you all march separately, each with his own train. [C. 93.] Friends, this procession is not worthy of the bridegroom! Will you expose yourselves to ridicule when you enter a strange city?'

The gods smiled at Viṣṇu's words and marched on separately, each with his own troops. Maheśa smiled to himself and thought, 'Hari must ever be indulging in sarcasm!' When he heard his dear Lord's loving words, he sent Bṛhiṇi and summoned all his hosts. At Śiva's command they all came and bowed their heads before their lord's lotus feet. Śiva laughed when he saw his retinue riding all kinds of steeds and appearing in all kinds of forms. Some had no mouths and some had many; some had no feet or hands and some had many; some had a number of eyes and some had none; some were stout and sturdy and some thin and weak.

[Ch. 7.] Some were thin and some were stout, some looked pure and some impure; frightful ornaments they wore and carried skulls in their hands, and all were smeared with fresh blood. Their faces were the faces of donkeys and dogs and pigs and jackals; who could count the countless forms his hosts assumed? All kinds of spirits there were and goblins and witches in troops, indescribable! [S. 93.] All the ghosts were dancing and singing songs in high glee, very repulsive to look at and uttering all sorts of outlandish cries.

<sup>1</sup> *disirāja*, or *dikpāla*: the guardians, or regents, of the quarters are generally listed thus: E. Indra; SE. Agni; S. Yama; SW. Nirṛiti; W. Varuna; NW. Vāyu; N. Kuvera; NE. Śiva; Urdhvam, Brahmā; Adhas, Ananta.

[C. 94.] As was the bridegroom, so was the procession. All kinds of games they played as they marched along the road. Meanwhile, Himālaya had erected a pavilion more wonderful than tongue can tell. To all the hills, great and small, that there were in the world—more than can be numbered—and to all the woods and seas, rivers and ponds, the Mountain King sent an invitation. They all came to Himālaya's palace, assuming whatever fair forms they wished, together with their retinues and noble wives, and lovingly sang songs of blessing. The king had already prepared a number of guest-chambers, and in them all the guests were lodged, each according to his degree. Compared with the beauty and splendour of the city even Brahmā's creative craft seemed mean.

[Ch. 8.] Poor indeed seemed Brahmā's creative craft when one looked at the beauty of the city. The woods, the gardens, wells and ponds and streams were all more lovely than words can tell. Many were the festive triumphal arches; every house was decked with flags and banners; so handsome and accomplished were the men and women that even the hearts of sages were fascinated by the sight of their beauty. [D. 94.] Can that city be described in which the Mother of the world became incarnate? There success, prosperity, wealth and happiness ever abounded in fullest measure.

[C. 95.] When tidings came that the procession was approaching the city, there was a stir in the town and its beauty was enhanced. The party of welcome adorned and made ready a number of carriages and went out to meet the guests with due respect. They rejoiced to see the host of gods, and when they saw Hari, they were overjoyed. But when they beheld Śiva's troops, all their steeds took fright and ran away. The elders plucked up courage and stayed where they were, but the children all fled for their lives. When they reached their homes and their parents asked them what was the matter, they trembled for fear and replied, 'What can we say? It's unspeakable! Is this a marriage-procession or the army of the god of death? The bridegroom is a maniac, riding on a bull; serpents and skulls and ashes are his ornaments!'

[Ch. 9.] 'Ashes and serpents and skulls are his ornaments: he's naked, with matted hair—a fearful sight! With him are ghosts and spirits and goblins and witches and demons, hideous to behold! Whoever looks on that procession and lives must be a very model of piety, and only he will see Umā's wedding!' That is what the boys were saying in every house.

[D. 95.] But the fathers and mothers all realized that it was Maheśa's retinue and smiled; they did their best to reassure their children, saying, 'Don't be afraid; there's nothing to fear.'

[C. 96.] Those who had gone to meet them brought in the procession and assigned magnificent guest-rooms to every guest. Mainā made ready the festal lamp<sup>1</sup> and the women with her sang songs of glad welcome. In her fair hand she held the golden platter and joyously went to wave the lamp round Hara's head. But when they saw Rudra's dreadful guise, the women were terrified and fled in utter panic into the palace. Maheśa moved on to the guest-rooms. Mainā was very sad at heart; she sent for Pārvati, and taking her very affectionately on to her lap, with her dark lotus eyes filled with tears, she said, 'Why has that fool of a Brahmā, who has bestowed on you such beauty, given you a lunatic for a husband ?'

[Ch. 10.] 'Why has Brahmā, who made you so beautiful, given you a madman to wed ? The fruit that should grow on the tree of Paradise is forced to grow on a mere acacia !<sup>2</sup> I'll hurl myself and you from a cliff, I'll burn us both in a fire or leap with you into the sea, but, come ruin, come ill-fame, I'll never let you marry this fellow while I live !'

[D. 96.] All the women were distressed when they saw the queen so sorrowful. Mainā, for love of her daughter, wept and lamented, saying, [C. 97.] 'What harm had I done to Nārada that he should ruin my happy home, and advise Umā to do penance to win a lunatic husband ? Truly he knows no passion, nor is he led astray by desire; for he is an eremite, without money, home or wife; therefore he is neither ashamed nor afraid to bring another's house to ruin. Can a barren woman know the pains of childbirth ?'

When Bhavāni saw her mother so distraught, she spoke gentle words of wisdom: 'Grieve not, my mother, but remember that the designs of fate cannot be annulled. If it is written in my destiny that I should wed a madman, then why should anyone be blamed ?

<sup>1</sup> A lamp with a large number of wicks, fed by ghī or camphor, is waved ceremonially about the head and limbs of the bridegroom. This is āratī. *parachana* is āratī performed at the bride's door by her female attendants, who also mark the bridegroom's forehead with curds and rice, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *babūla*: the gum acacia, *Mimosa arabica*. The wood of this tree is used for making cart-wheels, tent-pegs, etc., and the bark as an astringent for tanning. Indians clean their teeth with its twigs and use its products for medicinal purposes.

Mother, can you erase the lines that fate has drawn? Bring not reproaches on your head for naught!

[Ch. 11.] 'Mother, bring not reproaches on your head; cease your laments; this is no fitting time for tears. The joy and sorrow written on my forehead I shall experience wherever I may go.' Hearing Umā's modest and tender words, all the women grieved and, bitterly weeping, cast many a reproach on fate.

[D. 97.] Just then came Himālaya with Nārada and the Seven Seers right speedily to the palace; for they had heard the news.

[C. 98.] Then Nārada explained and told to all the story of Pārvati's former life. 'Hearken, Mainā,' he said, 'to the truth I tell. Your daughter is Bhavāni, Mother of the world. She is without birth or beginning, Śiva's immortal consort, ever dwelling in Śambhu as one-half of him. She creates the world, preserves and dissolves it, and of her own will assumes an illusory body. First, she went to take birth in the house of Dakṣa, and became a beautiful maiden named Sati; and there Sati married Śamkara, as the whole world knows well. One day as she was walking abroad with Śiva, she saw the sun of the lotus race of Raghu; in her folly she heeded not Śiva's words, but stupidly took the form of Sītā.

[Ch. 12.] 'Sati took the form of Sītā, and for that sin Śamkara deserted her; and when she was separated from Hara, she went to attend her father's sacrifice and was consumed in the sacrificial fire. Now she has been born in your house and has undergone severe penance to win her husband. Know this and lay aside your doubts. Girijā is for ever Śamkara's beloved spouse.'

[D. 98.] When they heard Nārada's words, all ceased to grieve, and in a moment the story he had told was noised abroad from house to house throughout the city. [C. 99.] Then Mainā and Himālaya were overjoyed and again and again did homage to Pārvati's feet; and all the people of the city, men and women, children, young and old, rejoiced exceedingly. Festive songs were heard in the city and everyone made ready all sorts of golden vessels. All manner of dishes were prepared, as the books of culinary science prescribed; but how can one describe a banquet in the house where Bhavāni the Mother dwelt? The king courteously invited all the wedding guests—Viṣṇu, Brahmā and all the gods. The guests sat down in rows, and the expert cooks began to serve the food; and when the women perceived that the

gods were feasting, they began to pass jesting remarks in gentle tones.

[Ch. 13.] The fair ladies jested in gentle tones and words of double meaning, and the gods were so delighted with their banter that they prolonged the feast. A myriad tongues could not tell their enjoyment as they feasted; but at last they rinsed their hands and mouths, took *pān* and retired, each to his guest-room.

[D. 99.] Then the sages went and told Himālaya that the appointed day was come, and when he saw that it was time for the wedding, he sent to summon the gods. [C. 100.] He summoned all the gods with reverence and gave each a seat suited to his degree. An altar was prepared as the Veda prescribed and the women sang auspicious festal songs. There was a throne of surpassing splendour, beyond all description, for Brahmā had fashioned it. Śiva bowed to the Brāhmans and took his seat upon it, dwelling in his heart on his own Lord Raghurāi. Then the high sages summoned Umā, and her maidens dressed her and brought her. All the gods were enchanted at the sight of her beauty; what poet in the world could describe her charm? The gods did obeisance to her in their hearts, for they recognized in her the Mother of the world and Śiva's consort. Bhavāni is the perfection of beauty, a beauty not a thousand tongues could tell.

[Ch. 14.] The marvellous beauty of the Mother of the world not a thousand tongues could tell. (Scripture, Śeṣa and Śāradā shrink from describing it; then how can Tulasi, dull of wit?) Bhavāni the Mother, altogether lovely, moved to the midst of the pavilion where Śiva sat; she could not look upon her husband for modesty, but her heart hovered like a bee about his lotus feet.

[D. 100.] At the sages' bidding Śambhu and Bhavāni worshipped Ganapati; let no one doubt when he hears this, remembering that the gods are without beginning.<sup>1</sup> [C. 101.] The great sages performed the whole ceremony in accordance with Vedic rites. The king of the mountains held the sacrificial grass, and taking his daughter's hand gave her to Śiva, acknowledging her to be Bhavāni. When Maheśa took her hand, all the high gods rejoiced. The sages pronounced the Vedic verses, and the gods cried, 'Glory, glory, glory to Śāmkara!' All sorts of music sounded and from the sky fell blossoms of all kinds in showers. The wedding of Hara

<sup>1</sup> The doubt would be due to the fact that Ganeśa was their son, not yet born.

and Girijā had been performed, and there was joy in all the worlds. Slave-girls and slaves, horses, chariots and elephants, cows, dresses and jewels and every sort of gift, and wagon-loads of corn and golden vessels the king gave as a dowry, all beyond description.

[Ch. 15.] All sorts of gifts the king gave as a dowry; then with folded hands he said, 'What can I give you, O Śaṅkara, who lack nothing you desire?' He stayed there clasping Śiva's lotus feet, while Śiva, the ocean of grace, did his best to comfort his wife's father. Then Mainā with a heart full of love clasped his lotus feet and said, [D. 101.] 'Umā, my lord, is dear to me as life itself; make her a servant of your house and pardon all her faults; be gracious now and grant this boon.'

[C. 102.] Śambhu reassured his mother-in-law and she bowed her head before his feet and went home. Then her mother sent for Umā, and taking her on her lap gave her this wise advice: 'Always worship Śaṅkara's feet; this is the duty of a wife, for her husband is her god, and there is none else.' Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and once more she clasped her daughter to her bosom. 'Why did God create women in the world?' she said. 'Those who depend on others can never hope for happiness!' Her mother was disquieted by her exceeding love, but she composed herself, for she thought it no fit time for mourning. Again and yet again she embraced her daughter and fell down before her, clasping her feet in unspeakable affection. Bhavāni embraced all the women, and then went again and clung to her mother's breast.

[Ch. 16.] Again she went and embraced her mother, and they all blessed her as was due. She turned again and again to look towards her mother as her maidens led her away to Śiva. Śaṅkara satisfied all the beggars with alms and went with Umā to his home. All the immortal gods rejoiced; they rained down flowers and played sweet music in the sky.

[D. 102.] Then with them went Himālaya lovingly to escort them; he on whose banner is blazoned the bull spoke many words of consolation and bade him farewell.

[C. 103.] Straightway Himālaya the Mountain King returned home, and summoning all the hills and lakes, treated them with all honour, and with courtesy and gifts and humble reverence gave them leave to depart.

As soon as Śambhu reached Kailāsa, all the gods returned to their own spheres. Śambhu and Bhavāni are the Father and Mother of the world; therefore I say nothing of their amorous dalliance.

They dwelt on Kailāsa with their attendants in the enjoyment of every luxury. Hara and Girijā experienced ever new delights, and in this manner a long time passed. Then was born their six-headed son, who slew the demon Tāraka in battle. The birth of the six-headed is famed in the Vedas and the Āgamas and the Purāṇas, and all the world knows the story.

[Ch. 17.] All the world knows of the birth of the six-headed, his exploits, his splendour and his mighty courage; and that is why I have spoken but briefly of the acts of Śiva's son. All men and women who recite or sing of this marriage of Umā and Śambhu win the blessings of success in all their works and the joy of a happy wedded life.

[D. 103.] (The acts of Girijā's lord are like an ocean that not even the Vedas can cross; then how can a dull-witted boor like Tulasi Dās describe them ?)

[C. 104.] When he heard the glorious, romantic story of Śambhu's acts, the sage Bharadvāja was delighted. He longed to hear more and more; his eyes filled with tears and he trembled with emotion. He was speechless for very love. When he saw his state, the wise sage was glad and said : Blessed indeed are you, great sage, in your birth, for Gauri's lord is dear to you as life ! Those who are not devoted to Śiva's lotus feet can never dream of pleasing Rāma; a sincere love for the feet of Viśvanāth is the mark of Rāma's votary. Who like Śiva has ever kept his vow of faith in Raghupati, seeing that for no fault in her he put away such a wife as Satī ? By accomplishing his vow he proved his devotion to Raghupati. Who, my friend, is so dear to Rāma as Śiva ?

[D. 104.] So far I have told you the acts of Śiva and have discovered the secret of your heart, that you are a sincere and altogether faultless servant of Rāma. [C. 105.] I have learnt that you are good and true. Now listen while I tell you of Raghupati's divine play. Believe me, sage, I cannot tell you how happy I am to have met you today. The acts of Rāma, great sage, are altogether immeasurable; a thousand million Śeṣas cannot recount them. However, as I have heard them, I recite them, thinking on the Lord who bears the bow and inspires the goddess of speech. For Śāradā is like a puppet, and Rāma who knows the thoughts of all holds the strings; and in that poet's heart to whom as a faithful servant he grants his grace he makes the goddess dance as on a stage. To that gracious Raghunāth I do obeisance and repeat the story of his stainless perfection.

Kailāsa is the noblest of mountains and very delightful, and there Śiva and Umā perpetually dwell. [D. 105.] There, too, dwell adepts, penitents and ascetics, gods and Kinnaras and anchorites, all meritorious, doing service to Śiva, the source of joy. [C. 106.] But those who are at enmity with Hari and Hara and are indifferent to religious duty cannot hope to approach it. On that mountain is a spreading banyan tree, always fresh and beautiful in every season. There blow cool, mild and fragrant breezes, and very cool is its shade, a tree beneath whose branches Śiva takes repose, as the Vedas tell. One day the Lord went to rest beneath that tree and was delighted to behold it. With his own hands the gracious Śambhu spread a tiger-skin on the ground and sat there at his ease, his body fair in hue as the jasmine or the moon or the conch, long-armed and clad in hermit's garb. His feet were like newly-opened lotuses, rose-coloured, and the brightness of their nails would scatter the darkness of faithful hearts. Snakes and ashes were Tripurāri's adornments, and his face outshone the brilliance of the autumn moon. [D. 106.] On his head were Gaṅgā and a crown of matted hair; his large eyes were like the lotus; a treasure-house of beauty, with blue throat, and, bright on his forehead, the crescent moon.

[C. 107.] There sat Love's enemy like Tranquillity incarnate. Pārvati—Bhavāni the Mother—seized the opportunity to approach him. Hara welcomed her as his own dear wife with great respect and seated her on his left. She took her seat beside Śiva with great joy and bethought her of all that had happened in her former life. Umā felt that her husband's love was even greater than of yore, and smilingly addressed him in affectionate terms; for Himālaya's daughter wished to ask him of that story that brings blessing to all the world.

'O Lord of the universe,' she said, 'my husband Purāri, throughout the three worlds your majesty is known. All things, moving and unmoved, serpents, men and gods do reverence to your lotus feet.'

[D. 107.] Lord, you are Śiva the all-powerful, all-knowing, home of all sciences and virtues, storehouse of ascetic practice, wisdom and detachment, and your name is a tree of Paradise to the suppliant. [C. 108.] O essence of bliss, if I have found favour in your sight and you believe me to be your loyal servant, then, Lord, dispel my ignorance and tell me the various stories of Raghunāth. How could he whose dwelling is beneath the tree of Paradise suffer pain that is born of poverty? Reflect on this, O moon-decked

Lord, and remove my sore bewilderment. Those sages, Lord, who speak of spiritual truths call Rāma the Absolute that knows no origin; and Śeṣa, Sāradā, Veda and Purāṇa all sing of Raghupati's perfection. You too, O foe of the Bodiless, reverently mutter "Rāma, Rāma" day and night. Is this Rāma the son of the king of Avadh or some other unborn, impersonal, invisible being?

[D. 108.] 'If he be the prince, how can he be the Absolute—and an Absolute distraught by the loss of a wife? When I consider his story and at the same time hear of his greatness, I am utterly perplexed! [C. 109.] If it be another who is all-pervading, almighty and without desire, tell me, husband, and explain. Think of me as ignorant and be not angry, but do what you can to remove my bewilderment. I beheld in the forest the sovereign power of Rāma, but I told you nothing because I was sore afraid; nevertheless, so dense was I that I guessed not the truth, and in full measure I paid the penalty! And still I feel some doubt; be gracious to me, I beseech you with folded hands. Lord, at that time you did your best to instruct me; do not be wroth, my husband, when you recall it. My perplexity is not now what it was, for I long to hear the story of Rāma. Tell me the sacred story of Rāma's perfections, O Lord of heaven, bedecked with the Serpent King!

[D. 109.] 'I lay my head upon the ground and do homage to your feet, and with folded hands make humble petition; extract the essence of scriptural doctrine and tell me of Raghubar's spotless glory.

[C. 110.] 'Though I am not worthy to hear it because I am a woman, yet am I your servant in thought and word and deed. The saints do not conceal the deepest mysteries when they find one who would hear them in time of sorrow; and, O king of heaven, it is in deep distress that I question you; have mercy on me and tell me the story of Raghupati.

'First, consider and tell me the reason why the impersonal Absolute assumed a personal form. Next, tell me, Lord, of the descent of Rāma, and then the story of his innocent childhood. Tell me how he married Janak's daughter and for what fault he was banished from the realm. Tell me of the mighty works he did when he dwelt in the forest, my husband, and how he slew Rāvan. Tell me of all his sportive acts when he sat upon the throne of his kingdom, O Śāṅkara, Very Joy!

[D. 110.] 'Then again, O Lord of grace, tell me of the marvellous act of Rāma, how the jewel of the race of Raghu passed with his

subjects to his own dwelling-place. [C. 111.] Then, Lord, explain that profound truth in the knowledge of which wise sages rest absorbed; faith, intuition, wisdom and detachment—all these explain, each with its several parts. Tell me, husband, of any other mysteries of Rāma's being, for your wisdom is unclouded; nor hide from me, Lord of compassion, aught I may have left unasked. The Veda declares you to be the *guru* of the three worlds; what can other base creatures know of these mysteries ?'

When Śiva heard Umā's sincere and guileless questions, he was pleased. Hara recalled all the acts of Rāma, and his eyes filled with tears in an ecstasy of love. The very form of the Lord Raghunāth entered his heart, and he felt supreme happiness and measureless delight. [D. 111.] For some time Maheśa remained absorbed in blissful contemplation; then he brought his mind back to the world and began with joy to tell of Raghupati's acts.

[C. 112.] 'To him who knows not Rāma the false appears the true, as a rope is mistaken for a snake. To him who knows Rāma the world is naught, as the illusion of a dream vanishes on waking. It is that same Rāma as a child to whom I do homage, by repeating whose Name all perfections are easily attained. May he who played in Daśarath's courtyard, the abode of bliss and vanquisher of misery, show me his favour !'

Tripurāri did reverence to Rāma and joyously continued his ambrosial speech: 'Blessed, blessed are you, O daughter of the Mountain King ! None brings such blessing to the world as you ! For you have asked for the story of Raghupati that cleanses all the spheres as Gaṅgā purifies the world. You love the feet of Raghubir, and have put a question for the whole world's good.'

[D. 112.] 'It is my belief, Pārvatī, that by the grace of Rāma not the least anxiety or perplexity or doubt or error remain in your mind, [C. 113.] but you have put forward this old doubt that all may receive blessing by the recital and hearing of the story. The ears of those who have not heard Hari's story are like the holes of snakes; the eyes of those who have not seen the saints are like the marks on peacocks' feathers; the heads of those who bow not before the feet of Hari and the *guru* are no better than bitter pumpkins. Those who have given devotion to Hari no place in their hearts are like dead men though yet alive. Those tongues that sing not the praise of Rāma's virtues are like the tongues of frogs. Hard as a thunderbolt and unfeeling is that heart that does not rejoice when it hears of Hari's acts. Listen, O Girijā,

to Rāma's mysterious deeds, a blessing to the gods and to the demons a delusion.

[D. 113.] 'The story of Rāma is like the cow of heaven that grants all joys to those who tend her, and the assembly of saints is as the abode of all the gods; who that knows this will not listen ?

[C. 114.] 'The story of Rāma is the pleasant clapping of the hands to scare away the birds of doubt; the story of Rāma is an axe to fell the tree of the Kaliyuga. Listen with reverence, O daughter of the Mountain King. Scripture has hymned the glorious name of Rāma, his countless virtuous acts, his lives and all that he has done. As Rāma, the Blessed Lord, is infinite, so are his stories, his renown and manifold perfections without end. Yet—for I mark your great devotion—I will tell the story as I have heard it and as far as I understand it. Umā, the question you have asked is simple and sincere, profitable and after the saints' own hearts and pleasing, too, to me. But, Bhavānī, there was one point that pleased me not, though you only suggested it because you were perplexed, in that you said that the Rāma whom scriptures hymn and sages contemplate must be some other.

[D. 114.] 'It is the base who utter and listen to such lies, possessed by the devil of delusion, heretics, opposed to the worship of Hari, who know not what is true and what is false. [C. 115.] It is the ignorant and unlearned, the blind and unblest, the mirror of whose souls is clouded by the film of sensibles, the lewd, deceitful and very evil, who never dream of visiting the assembly of the saints—it is they who say such things as have no warrant in the Veda. They know not what is good for them or ill; the mirror of their souls is sullied and they have no eyes to see. How can such wretches behold the vision of Rāma's self? Those who have no clear understanding of the impersonal and the personal prate of all kinds of fantastic notions; misled by Hari's illusive power they wander astray in the world; what wonder, then, they babble? Deranged, devil-possessed, drunken, they speak without thinking; when men have drunk deep of the wine of delusion, one should shut one's ears to their ravings.

[S. 115.] 'Ponder this in your heart and put away doubt and worship the feet of Rāma. Hearken, O daughter of the Mountain King, to what I am about to say, dispelling error as the sun's rays scatter the darkness.

[C. 116.] 'There is no difference between the personal and the impersonal; so say the sages, the Purāṇas, wise men and the Vedas.

The impersonal, formless, invisible and unborn becomes personal for love of the faithful. How does the impersonal become the personal? Just as water is not different from snow and ice. How can delusion be associated with him whose name is a sun to disperse the darkness of error? Rāma is the sun, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss, untouched by the shadow of the night of delusion. He is the Blessed Lord, whose being is Light itself, and in him is no place for a dawn of wisdom. Sorrow and joy, knowledge and ignorance, self-conceit and pride—these are the lot of mortal man; but Rāma, as all the world knows, is the all-pervading Absolute, Supreme Bliss, God on high from everlasting. [D. 116.] That renowned Spirit, in whom all light abides, revealed as Lord of the whole sum of things, is my master, the jewel of the race of Raghu! So saying, Śiva bowed his head.

[C. 117.] 'The ignorant do not understand their own error, but, fools that they are, attribute their delusion to the Lord; just as senseless men, when they see a curtain of cloud in the sky, say that it has hidden the sun, and a man who presses his eye with a finger imagines that there are two moons in sight. Such delusion, O Umā, is associated with Rāma as the appearance of darkness, smoke or dust in the sky. Sensible objects, the senses, the deities of the senses and the individual souls each depend on the next in order for their conscious existence; but he who ultimately illuminates them all is Rāma, lord of Avadh, without beginning.<sup>1</sup> The world is the illuminable, and Rāma is he who illuminates it; he is the lord of illusion and the home of wisdom and virtue, by whose reality the order of unconscious nature, allied with illusion, appears to be real.'

[D. 117.] 'As there appears to be silver in the oyster-shell and moisture in the rays of the sun, though these appearances are at no time real, yet no one can free himself from the delusion, [C. 118.] in the same way the world is dependent on Hari. Though it is unreal, it does cause pain, as when a man dreams that one cuts off his head, and the pain persists till he awakes. He by whose

<sup>1</sup> For example: a table is seen by the eye; sight depends on the sun; the sun itself is nothing apart from the individual soul, for whose delectation all *prakṛiti* plays; and the individual soul is merely an illusory part of the supreme illuminating soul, which is here identified with Rāma.

Each sense has its own deity, e.g. the deity of touch is Air; of smell, the two Aśvins; of sight, the Sun; of hearing, Varuna.

favour such error is corrected, Girijā, is that gracious Raghubarā. Him whose origin and end none has grasped the Vedas have thus defined by inference as best they could; he walks without feet, he hears without ears, and without hands he performs his many deeds; without a tongue he enjoys all tastes, and without a voice he speaks most eloquently; without a body he touches, without eyes he sees and without a nose he smells every odour. So marvellous in all ways are his acts that none can speak of his greatness.

[D. 118.] 'He whom the Vedas and the wise thus hymn and whom the sages contemplate is that son of Daśarath who loves his votaries, the king of Kosala, the Blessed Lord. [C. 119.] He by the might of whose name I grant liberation to those whom I see dying at Kāśī is that same Raghubar, my lord and the master of all created things, who knows the secrets of all hearts. When men even involuntarily utter his name, the sins they have committed in all their lives are burnt up, and those who meditate on him with reverence pass over the ocean of birth and death as though it were a puddle. Rāma is that Supreme Spirit, Bhavāni, and that you should attribute error to him is most unfitting. It is by admitting such doubt into the mind that knowledge and detachment and all virtues are lost.'

When she heard Śiva's enlightening words, all her critical doubts were resolved; she began to love and trust in Raghupati's feet, and her grievous incredulity passed away. [D. 119.] Again and again Girijā clasped her lord's lotus feet, and folding her lotus hands spoke sweet words steeped, as it were, in love:

[C. 120.] 'Your speech is like the moon's cool rays, and when I hear it, the burning autumn heat of error no more torments me. You, gracious Lord, have resolved all my doubt and now I know Rāma in his true form. Now, husband, by your grace I am no longer sad but am made happy by the favour of my lord's feet. Now, though I am a woman of foolish nature and unwise, believe me to be your servant, and if I have found favour in my lord's sight, answer the question I first put. If Rāma be the Absolute, pure Consciousness, immortal, untouched by aught and yet abiding in the city of the hearts of all, why, Lord, did he take human form? Explain it to me, O Śiva!'

When he heard Umā's very humble prayer and marked her pure delight in Rāma's story, [D. 120a.] Love's enemy, the all-wise Śāmkara, was pleased and lavished praise on Umā. Then said the Lord of grace:

[S. 120b.] 'Listen, Bhavāni, to the sacred story, the unsullied Lake of Rāma's acts, as Bhuśundi told it and it was heard by Garur, the king of birds. [120c.] I shall tell you later the manner of their noble converse; hear now the very beautiful and faultless story of Rāma's incarnation. [120d.] Infinite are the virtues and the names of Hari; his stories and his forms countless and immeasurable. I tell of them as far as I am able; do you, Umā, reverently listen.

[C. 121.] 'Hearken, Girījā! Many are the pure and beauteous acts of Hari, sung in the Vedas and the Āgamas. The cause of Hari's descents cannot be told exactly. Listen, wise lady! I hold that Rāma is beyond comprehension by reason, thought or speech, yet as saints and sages, Veda and Purāna, explain in part, according to the measure of their understanding, so I, fair lady, tell you the cause as I understand it. Whenever righteousness decays and demons, vile and arrogant, wax strong and work lawless deeds beyond the telling, and Brāhmans and cows and gods and earth suffer hurt, the gracious Lord puts on various bodily forms and relieves the distress of his faithful servants. [D. 121.] He slays the demons and sets the gods upon their throne; he defends the bounds of his own Vedic law and proclaims throughout the world his spotless glory.<sup>1</sup> This is the cause of Rāma's birth.

[C. 122.] 'Thus Rāma's votaries sing his glory and cross the sea of birth and death. The gracious Lord puts on mortal forms for the sake of the faithful. Many are the causes of Rāma's births, each more marvellous than the others. One or two of these births I relate; do you, wise Bhavāni, listen with attention.

'There were two doorkeepers, Jaya and Vijaya, dear to Hari, as all men know. These two brothers were cursed by a Brāhman and were born again as demons in bodies of darkness, Hiranya-kāśipu and Hiranyakṣa, born to crush the pride of heaven's king, as all the world knows. Victorious in battle were they, warriors renowned; one Hari slew, assuming the form of a boar; then, as Narasimha, he slew the other, and made known to all the glorious renown of Prahlāda his servant.

[D. 122.] 'After that again they were born as demons, strong and mighty in battle, Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvan, warriors who overcame the gods, as all men know. [C. 123.] They had not

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Bhagavadgītā*, iv. 7, 8. 'Whosoever right declines, O Bharata, and wrong uprises, then I create myself; to guard the good and to destroy the wicked and to confirm the right I come into being in this age and in that.'

won release, though slain by the Blessed Lord, for the Brâhman's curse was to prevail for three lives. So once again the Lord who loves the faithful put on mortal form for the demons' weal. This time Kaśyapa was his father and Aditi his mother, and their names were Daśarath and Kausalyâ. Thus in one aeon he became incarnate and performed holy deeds in the world.

'In another aeon Śambhu, seeing that the gods were in distress, because they were all being vanquished in battle by Jalandhara, fought strenuously against him; but the mighty demon could in no way be slain. The wife of the demon king was very loyal to him, and owing to her virtue Purâri could not overcome him. [D. 123.] So the Lord Râma by a trick caused her to break her marriage vow and thus accomplished the purpose of the gods. [C. 124.] When she discovered the secret stratagem, she was furious and cursed him. Hari, the Blessed Lord, gracious and full of sportive wiles, accepted the curse. In that aeon Jalandhara was born again as Râvan, and Râma slew him in battle and granted him final release.'

'This was one cause of his birth, one reason why Râma assumed the form of man. Hearken, sage!<sup>1</sup> Each incarnation has its story, and these stories poets have sung in many ways. At one time Nârada cursed him, and in one aeon he became incarnate for his sake.'

When Girijâ heard these words, she was amazed and said, 'But Nârada is a votary of Viṣṇu and a learned sage! Why did the sage pronounce a curse? What wrong had Lakṣmi's lord done? Tell me this story, Purâri. It is astonishing that the sage should have been so misled.'

[D. 124a.] Then said Maheśa with a smile, 'No one is wise or foolish. As and when Raghupati wills a man should be, such at that moment he becomes.' [S. 124b.] Listen, Bharadvâja, with reverence while I tell the story of Râma's perfections.

(Worship Raghunâth, destroyer of birth and death, says Tulasi, and have done with all pride and self-conceit!)

[C. 125.] 'In the Himâlaya mountains there is a very holy cave, and near it flows the beauteous Gaṅgâ. When he saw so pure and lovely a retreat, the divine seer was delighted. As he gazed upon the hill and the river and the forest glades, he was filled with

<sup>1</sup> Bharadvâja. Note that the vocatives throughout vary between Pârvati (addressed by Śiva), Bharadvâja (addressed by Yâjñavalkya) and Garur (addressed by Kâkabhuśundi).

passionate love for the feet of Lakṣmi's lord, and when he thought on Hari, the curse was lifted<sup>1</sup> and he fell into a trance; for his soul was by nature blameless. The king of heaven was afraid when he saw the sage's state; so he sent for Kāma and addressed him courteously. "Go," he said, "with your assistants to do me service." Kāmadeva went off delighted. In the heart of Indra was dire alarm lest Nārada should desire to take possession of his city. The lustful and the covetous throughout the world fear everyone, like a crafty crow. [D. 125.] Just as a foolish dog runs off with a dry bone when he sees a lion, thinking in his folly that he may rob him of it, even so the Lord of heaven had no shame.

[C. 126.] When Kāmadeva reached the sage's retreat, he fashioned Spring by his magic art. All manner of trees burst into many-coloured blossoms; cuckoos uttered their notes, and there was a murmur of bees. A pleasant breeze sprang up, cool, mild and fragrant, fanning the flame of passion. Rambhā and the youthful nymphs of heaven, all skilled in the arts of the peerless Archer, sang songs of varied pitch and modulation and played all kinds of games, ball in hand. As he watched his assistants, Kāmadeva was overjoyed and once again employed all manner of delusions. But the arts of Love influenced not the sage, and guilty Kāmadeva feared for his own safety. Can anyone encroach upon his bounds whose mighty protector is Lakṣmi's lord?

[D. 126.] Terrified, the god of love and those who helped him acknowledged their defeat; he went and clasped the sage's feet and very humbly begged forgiveness. [C. 127.] But in Nārada's heart was no wrath at all; with loving words he comforted Kāmadeva. Then, bowing their heads before the sage's feet, Love and his assistants took their leave and went their way. To the court of heaven's Lord he went and told the story of the sage's clemency and all that he himself had done. All were amazed when they heard of it; they praised the sage and bowed the head to Hari.

'Then Nārada went to Śiva, proud at heart that he had conquered Love. To Śiva he related Kāma's deeds, but because Śiva held him very dear, he warned him thus: "O sage, I earnestly beseech you, never repeat to Hari this tale as you have told it me. Even should the subject arise, keep silence!"'

[D. 127.] It was good advice that Śiva gave, but it pleased not Nārada. Hear, Bharadvāja, the strange event. The will of Hari

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Nārada.

is all-powerful. [C. 128.] Rāma wills to do and it is done; there is none who can make it other. Śaṅbhū's words did not please the sage. He went straight to Brahmā's realm, and taking forthwith his melodious lute in hand, and singing, skilled minstrel as he was, of Hari's virtues, the high sage went on to the Ocean of Milk, where dwells Viṣṇu, Lord of the Veda. Gladly rose Lakṣmī's lord to meet him, and sat down with the seer. The sovereign of all creation said with a smile, "It is long, O sage, since you showed me this favour." Nārada told him the whole story of Kāma's deeds, though Śiva had already warned him not to do so. The delusive power of Raghupati is very strong; what mortal is there whom it does not mislead ?

[D. 128.] 'With stern look but gentle words the Great God spoke: "Ignorance, lust, pride and self-conceit perish at the very thought of you! Hearken, O sage!" [C. 129.] Infatuation dwells in the mind of him in whose heart is neither wisdom nor self-governance. But you who are so steadfast in devotion to the vow of continence—what pain can Kāmadeva cause you?" Complacently Nārada replied, "Blessed Lord, it is all of thy grace!"'

'The Compassionate reflected and saw that the stout tree of pride had sprung up in Nārada's breast. "Therefore," he thought, "I shall speedily root it up, for it is my vow to work for my servants' welfare. I shall surely devise some plan which may be for the sage's good and also afford me sport."

'Then Nārada bowed his head before Hari's feet and departed, and his heart was bursting with ever-increasing pride. But Viṣṇu sent forth his own magic power; hear now his mysterious plot.

[D. 129.] 'He fashioned on the road a city one thousand miles<sup>1</sup> in breadth, more beautiful even than the city of Viṣṇu in the varied manner of its construction; [C. 130.] and in that city dwelt handsome men and women, as though many a Kāmadeva and Rati had taken bodily form. King Śilanidhi lived in that city, and his companies of horses and elephants and troops none could number. His royal power and luxury were like those of a hundred Indras; he was the abode of grace and splendour and might and prudent government. He had a daughter, Viśvamohani, at the sight of whose beauty even Lakṣmī would be charmed. Hari's phantom princess was a mine of all perfections; her loveliness no

<sup>1</sup> The extent of a *yojana* is variously calculated; here taken to be eight or nine miles.

words can describe. The princess was about to choose a husband, and for this reason countless princes had come to the city. The sage entered the city to see the sights, and began to make inquiry of all that dwelt there. When he heard of all that was happening, he went to the king's palace, and the king received the sage with deference and gave him a seat.

[D. 130.] 'The king brought the princess and showed her to Nārada and said, "Consider, lord, and tell me all her virtues and her faults."

[C. 131.] 'When the sage beheld her beauty, he forgot his vow of continence and went on gazing at her for a long time. As he looked on her distinctive signs, his wits went all astray; inwardly he was delighted, but he said nothing openly. "Who marries her," he thought, "will be immortal, unconquerable on the field of battle; all creatures of the earth will serve him whom Śilanidhi's daughter weds!" He thought on the fair character and fortune her face revealed and laid them up in his heart; to the king he made some pretence of an answer: "Your daughter is fair and fortunate," said Nārada to the king, and went off pondering, "I must go and think out a scheme to make the maiden marry me. This is no time for prayers and penance. [D. 131.] O God, how may I win the girl? At this time I need superb beauty and most excellent grace of form, that at the sight the maiden may be charmed and cast upon me the wreath of victory. [G. 132.] I might ask Hari for beauty, but it would take a very long time to go to him, my friend. There is no one who desires my weal as Hari does; let him then help me at this crisis!"

'There and then he offered up an earnest prayer and the gracious Lord revealed himself in sportive mood. When he saw the Lord, the sage was well content and rejoiced that his purpose would be accomplished. In piteous tones he told his tale, saying, "Be gracious and help me! Grant me, Lord, such beauty as is thine; for in no other way may I win her. Lord, by whatever means it may be done, bring me good success and that right speedily; I am thy slave!" Seeing the mighty power of his illusion, the Lord who has pity on the humble laughed to himself and said, [D. 132.] "Hearken, O Nārada! In such wise will I act as to ensure your highest good—naught else; nor are my words untrue. [C. 133.] Listen, ascetic sage; if a sick man, distressed by his disease, ask for food that will harm him, the doctor will refuse to give it him; even so have I determined that which is for your good."

'So saying, the Lord vanished; but the sage was so infatuated by the influence of illusion that he understood not Hari's obscure speech. Straightway went the king of seers to the place where the arena was prepared for the maiden's choice. The kings were sitting, each upon his throne, in great magnificence, attended by their retinues. "Such is my exceeding beauty," thought the sage in joyful expectation, "that she could never pass me by to wed another." But for the sage's good the gracious Lord had bestowed on him an unspeakably hideous shape. Yet no one could detect what had happened, but all thought him to be Nārada and bowed before him.

[D. 133.] 'Now there were two of Śiva's henchmen who knew the whole secret; in Brāhmaṇa guise they went about and looked on; very whimsical creatures they! [C. 134.] In that rank where the sage went and took his seat, priding himself beyond all measure on his beauty, sat also Śiva's two servants, disguised as Brāhmaṇas, and no one guessed who they were. In Nārada's hearing they uttered words of sarcasm: "Marvellous beauty has Hari bestowed on him! The princess will be charmed when she sees his graceful form, and will surely wed him, deeming him Hari<sup>1</sup> in person!" The sage's mind was deluded and no longer under his control, and Śiva's servants mocked him to their hearts' content. Though the sage heard their subtle jeers, he did not understand them, for his intellect was all astray. Nobody else realized exactly what had happened, but the king's daughter saw him as he was, and when she beheld his monkey face and repulsive body, she was full of indignation.

[D. 134.] 'Then with her attendant maidens the princess moved on like a swan. She went round, looking at all the kings, bearing in her lotus hand the wreath of victory.

[C. 135.] 'Never for a moment did she look towards that spot where Nārada was sitting, swollen with conceit. Again and again the saint jumped up in his agitation. Śiva's servants smiled to see his plight. Then came there the gracious Lord, wearing the form of a king. Gladly the maiden cast about him the wreath of victory; so Lakṣmi's lord carried off the prize and the assembled kings were in despair. Under the influence of illusion the sage was utterly bewildered, as though a jewel had dropped and fallen from his purse.

<sup>1</sup> *hari* also means 'monkey'.

'Then said Śiva's henchmen with a smile, "Go and look at your face in a mirror!" With these words the two ran off in great alarm. The sage looked in the water and saw his face, and when he beheld his form, he grew more wrathful yet and cursed them with a very dreadful curse; [D. 135.] "Go, you twain, deceitful and guilty! Become demons of the night! You laughed at me; now reap your reward, and in future beware how you laugh at a sage!"'

[C. 136.] 'Again he looked into the water and saw his own proper form. Yet was his soul not satisfied; his lips trembled and there was rage in his heart. Swift he sped to Lakṣmi's lord, thinking, "I shall curse him or myself perish, for he has made a mock of me in all the world!" Hari, the demons' foe, met him on the way, and with him were Lakṣmi and that same princess. The Lord of lords addressed him in gentle tones: "Whither away, O sage, like one distraught?" At these words Nārada was infuriated, and under the influence of illusion all sense deserted him. "You cannot bear to look on another's success," he cried. "You are a mass of jealousy and guile! At the churning of ocean you drove Rudramad and, egging on the gods, caused him to drink the poison. [D. 136.] Wine for the demons and poison for Śamkara, but for yourself Lakṣmi and the lovely jewel! You're utterly self-centred and deceitful, continually practising guile! [C. 137.] You're absolutely independent and there's no one to check you; so you do whatever you please. You make good evil and evil good, with a heart that feels neither grief nor joy. You have tested everyone by perpetually deceiving them; you fear nobody and you think it all good fun. You are not hindered by regard for good or evil deeds, and so far no one has put you right. But now you've made fun of someone important, and you'll get what you deserve! Assume the same form as that in which you cheated me! That is my curse! You made me look like a monkey, so monkeys will be your helpers; you caused my dire disgrace, so you will sorrow for the loss of your wife!"'

[D. 137.] 'The Lord gladly took on himself the curse and humbly begged Nārada's forgiveness. Then the gracious Lord withdrew the power of his illusion.

[C. 138.] 'When Hari removed his illusion, neither Lakṣmi nor the princess was to be seen. Then the sage was terrified, and clasping Hari's feet cried, "Protect me, O thou who relievest thy

suppliants' distress! O gracious Lord, may my curse be of none effect!"

"It is my will," said he who has mercy on the humble.

"Full many an ill word have I spoken," said the sage; "how may my sins be blotted out?"

"Go and repeat the hundred names of Śamkara and you will at once experience relief. No one is as dear to me as Śiva; never for a moment cease to believe it. He on whom Purāṇi bestows not his favour, O sage, wins not to faith in me. Go, wander through the earth with this thought in your heart; henceforward my illusion will not come nigh you."

[D. 138.] With these and many other words the Lord consoled the sage and disappeared. Nārada departed to Brahmā's realm, singing the praise of Rāma's virtues.

[C. 139.] When Hara's henchmen saw the sage walking on the road, freed from illusion and full of inward joy, they came in terror to Nārada, clasped his feet and spoke a piteous word: "O king of sages, we are Hara's servants, not Brāhmans. We have done very wrong and have met our deserts. Graciously cancel the curse, O merciful lord!" Nārada, who has compassion on the humble, replied, "Go you both and be born as demons; great be your power and splendour and might. When you shall have conquered the universe by the strength of your arm, Viṣṇu shall take the form of man and you shall die in battle at Hari's hand, and so be released nor born again in the world." The pair bowed their heads before the sage and departed, and in due time were born as demons.

[D. 139.] It was for this cause that in one aeon the Lord became incarnate as a man—Hari, who delights the gods and brings joy to his faithful people and relieves the earth of its burdens.

[C. 140.] Thus Hari's lives and acts are many—charming, beneficent and marvellous. Whenever aeon after aeon the Lord descends to earth and performs all kinds of glorious exploits, the high sages have sung his story, composing very sacred verses, and have told of his many unrivalled adventures, at which the wise are not astonished when they hear them. Hari is infinite, and infinite Hari's stories; and all the saints recite them and listen to them in various ways. The glorious acts of Rāmacandra cannot be sung in ten thousand aeons.

I have told this tale, Bhavāni, to prove that even wise sages are misled by Hari's illusion. The Lord is sportive and acts for his suppliants' weal; he is to be found of those that worship him, one

who eases every pain. [S. 140.] There is no god or man or sage whom his powerful illusion does not lead astray. This remember and worship in your heart the Lord of mighty illusion.

[C. 141.] 'Now, daughter of the Mountain King, hear yet another cause. I tell you at length this wonderful story to explain why the unborn, impersonal and formless Absolute became king of the city of Kosala. That Lord, whom you beheld roaming the forest with his brother, clad in hermit's garb, at the sight of whose acts, Bhavānī, when you were Sati, you became as one distraught—and still the shadow of that madness rests upon you—hearken to his acts that heal the sick fancies of error. I shall relate to you all the mysterious deeds he did in that incarnation, according to the measure of my understanding.'

When Umā heard Śāmkara's words, Bharadvāja, she was embarrassed and smiled affectionately; and again he on whose banner is blazoned the bull began to tell for what reason the incarnation took place. [D. 141.] That same story, great sage, I tell you in full; hearken attentively; the glorious story of Rāma cleanses the Kaliyuga of its defilement and brings blessing to men.

[C. 142.] 'Manu Svayambhuva and Śatarūpā, from whom sprang the incomparable race of men, were a wedded pair, perfect in conjugal fidelity and virtuous conduct, whose rectitude scripture extols to this day. King Uttānapāda was their son, and his son was Dhruva, Hari's votary. The name of Manu's younger son was Priyavrata, exalted in Veda and Purāna. Their daughter, again, was Devahūti, the beloved wife of Kardama the sage, and of her womb was born the Primal Deity as Kapila, lord of grace and compassion. He it was who brought to light the Sāṃkhya system, Kapila the blessed, skilled in the analysis of elements. That Manu reigned for many years and upheld in every way the commandments of the Lord.

[S. 142.] 'But life in a palace does not conduce to detachment from worldly affairs; he grew old and felt very sad at heart that his life had passed without devotion to Hari. [C. 143.] So he constrained his son to succeed to the throne and himself went with his wife to the woods. The forest called Naimiṣa is a very sacred spot, a holy place that grants perfection to the aspirant, and there dwell companies of sages and adepts. Thither with happy heart went king Manu. As the resolute pair walked along the road, they looked like Wisdom and Faith in bodily form. They reached the bank of the Gomati, and gladly bathed in its clear

stream. Adepts and hermits and wise men came to meet them, for they recognized in him a kingly seer, upholder of righteousness. The sages reverently escorted them to all the most noted places of pilgrimage. Their frames were emaciated and they wore hermit's dress, and they were for ever listening to the recital of the Purāṇas in the assembly of the saints.

[D. 143.] 'Husband and wife devoutly repeated the spell of twelve syllables<sup>1</sup> with thoughts firmly fixed on the lotus feet of Vāsudeva.

[C. 144.] They fed on vegetables, fruit and roots, and meditated on the Absolute, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss. Next, they began to undergo penance for Hari's sake; they gave up roots and fruit and subsisted on water. Ever in their hearts was a yearning to see with their own eyes the Supreme Lord, impersonal, indivisible, without end or beginning, whom mystics contemplate, whom the Veda defines as "Not thus, not thus", pure delight, without attribute or equal, from a part of whom are born many a Śambhu, Brahmā and Viṣṇu, the Blessed Lord. "So mighty a Lord," they thought, "subjects himself to his servants and for the sake of the faithful assumes in sport a body. If this be true, as scripture declares, our desire will be fulfilled."

[D. 144.] 'Thus passed six thousand years while they lived on water; then for seven thousand years they subsisted on air.

[C. 145.] Next, for ten thousand years they even gave up air and remained, each of them, standing on one leg.

'When Brahmā, Hari and Hara beheld their interminable penance, they came to Manu many times and tempted them in many ways, asking them to claim a boon; but, utterly resolute, they could not be moved. Their bodies were now mere skeletons, but their minds felt not the least pain. The omniscient Lord recognized the king and queen—ascetics devoted to none other—to be his true servants, and from heaven there came a voice, very solemn and full of ambrosial grace, saying, "Ask, ask a boon!" When this glorious voice that would quicken the dead passed through their ears and entered their hearts, their bodies became strong and beautiful as though they had only just left their homes.

[D. 145.] 'When they heard the ambrosial voice, they trembled all over with rapture. Manu prostrated himself and spoke, unable to contain his devotion: [C. 146.] "Hear me, thou who art the tree of Paradise and the Heavenly Cow to thy servants! Brahmā,

<sup>1</sup> *Om namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya.*

Hari and Hara worship the dust of thy feet. Easy of access art thou to those who serve thee, bringer of every joy, protector of the suppliant and Lord of all creation. Friend of the desolate, if thou lovest us, graciously grant this boon; on that true form of thine that dwells in the heart of Śiva and for love of which sages do their endeavour, the form that sails like a swan on the holy lake of Rhuśundi's mind—on that form which the Vedas extol as both personal and impersonal, graciously grant, O healer of thy suppliants' woe, that we may feast our eyes!"

"The Lord was very pleased with the royal pair's request, gentle, humble and full of devotion. The treasure-house of grace who loves his votaries, the Blessed Lord who dwells in the whole universe,<sup>1</sup> was manifest.

[D. 146.] "Myriads of Loves were put to shame when they saw the beauty of his body, dark as the dark-blue lotus or the sapphire or the dark rain-burdened cloud; [C. 147.] his face matchless in beauty as the autumn moon; lovely cheeks and chin and neck marked like the conch; ruddy lips and charming teeth and nose, and a smile brighter than the moonbeam; eyes perfect in loveliness like newly-opened lotus buds; a fascinating glance to enchant the soul; curved eyebrows outrivalling in charm Love's bow; a sect-mark gleaming on his forehead; fish-shaped earrings in his ears and on his head a glorious crown; curly hair like a swarm of bees; on his breast the Śrivatsa<sup>2</sup> and a charming woodland wreath, a garland of gems and jewelled ornaments; a lion-like neck and beautiful sacred thread; beautiful, too, the bracelets on his arms, strong comely arms like an elephant's trunk; at his side a quiver, and bow and arrows in his hands; [D. 147.] yellow dress more brilliant than the lightning; three fair folds on his belly, and a navel so captivating that it seemed to have stolen the beauty of Yamunā's eddies.

[C. 148.] "None can describe those lotus feet, haunted by the bees that are the souls of sages. On his left there matched his beauty the Primal Energy, perfect loveliness, cause of the world, she from a part of whom are born those mines of virtue, innumerable Laksmīs, Umās and Brahmāṇis; she by the play of whose eyebrows the world comes into being stood on Rāma's left, Sītā herself. When they beheld the boundless beauty of Hari's form, Manu and Śatarūpā gazed fixedly upon them with wide-open eyes. Reverently

<sup>1</sup> *Vīsuavīśa*: or, in whom the whole universe dwells.

<sup>2</sup> See App., s.v. Visnu.

they looked on their matchless loveliness nor could be satisfied. They lost all consciousness in an excess of rapture; they fell prostrate and clasped his feet with their hands. The Lord of compassion touched their heads with his own lotus hands and at once raised them to their feet.

[D. 148.] "Then said the gracious Lord, "Know that I am very pleased. Ask now whatever boon you will, believing me to be the giver of all good."

[C. 149.] "When the king heard the Lord's words, he folded his hands, and taking courage gently replied, "Lord, now that we have seen thy lotus feet our every desire has been fulfilled. Yet there is still one boon I earnestly crave, both easy to grant and difficult; therefore it is hard to express it. Easy for thee to grant, divine master, but difficult for me to receive in my lowly estate. Just as a poor man who has found the tree of Paradise hesitates to ask for great wealth, because he does not realize its power, so I doubt in my heart; and this thou knowest who readest the hearts of all! Master, fulfil my longing!"

"Hesitate not," said the Lord, "but ask of me, O king; for there is naught that I will not grant you."

[D. 149.] "O greatest of givers and most gracious Lord," said Manu, "I tell thee truly, I wish to have a son like thyself. Can aught be hid from the Lord?"

[C. 150.] "When the Lord of compassion marked his devotion and heard his words beyond price, he said, "So be it! But where can I go to seek another like myself? I myself will come and be your son, O king!" Then, seeing Šatarūpā with folded hands, he said, "Lady, ask what boon you will."

"Lord," she replied, "the boon the wise king has craved is altogether after my heart, O gracious one. But, Lord, it is a very presumptuous request, though thou art pleased to grant it because thou lovest thy votaries. For thou art the father of Brahmā and the gods, master of the world, the Absolute, and thou knowest the secrets of all hearts. This I remember and doubt; yet what the Lord has said must come to pass. O Lord, that bliss which those who are thy votaries enjoy, that liberation they attain—[D. 150.] that bliss, that liberation, that faith, that devotion to thy feet, that wisdom, that manner of life, O Lord, grant of thy grace to us!"

[C. 151.] "To her speech, so gentle and profound and charming and sweet, the ocean of grace replied in kindly tones, "I have granted

all your heart's desire; doubt not. Mother, by my grace the spiritual wisdom that is yours shall never fail."

'Then Manu worshipped his feet and said again, "Lord, there is one more request I would proffer. May I love thy feet as a father loves his son, however foolish anyone may call me. As a serpent cannot live without his jewel, or a fish out of water, so is my life dependent upon thee!"' This boon he asked and stayed clasping his feet.

"So be it," said the Lord of compassion. "Now do what I enjoin. Go and dwell in the capital of the king of heaven. [S. 151.] There, my friend, enjoy luxury and delights, and when some time has passed, you will be born as the king of Avadh, and then I shall be your son. [C. 152.] I shall fashion the body of a man, formed of my own will, and shall become manifest in your palace, my friend. I shall assume a body with all my parts and work deeds to bring happiness to my votaries, deeds which the thrice-blest will hear with reverence, and, hearing, will put off self-conceit and pride and pass over the ocean of birth and death. And this my Māyā, the Primal Energy, who has brought the world into being, will also become incarnate. So shall I accomplish your desire. My promise is true, true, true!"'

'With this repeated utterance the Blessed Lord of grace vanished from sight. The king and queen laid up in their hearts the vision of the Lord who grants his grace to the faithful and dwelt for some time in that hermitage. Then in due time they quitted the body without a pang and went and took up their abode in Amarāvatī.' [D. 152.] This very sacred story Śiva related to Umā. Now, Bharadvāja, hear yet another cause of Rāma's birth. [C. 153.] Listen, sage, to this holy and ancient legend which Śambhu told to Girijā.

'There is a land, known to all the world, named Kaikeya, where king Satyaketu reigned, an upholder of righteousness, versed in statecraft, splendid, majestic, virtuous and strong. He had two sons, patterns of virtue, very valiant warriors. The elder son, heir to the throne, was called Pratāpabhānu; the name of the second son was Arimardana, of unequalled strength of arm and staunch in war. The two brothers were much attached to one another; their mutual love was perfect and sincere. The king delivered up the kingdom to his elder son and himself went to the forest to worship Hari.

[D. 153.] 'When Pratāpabhānu became king, his succession was proclaimed throughout the land. He protected his people as the Vedas enjoined, and nowhere in the realm was the least offence committed. [G. 154.] The king had a minister called Dharmaruci, who was devoted to his interests and as wise as Śukra. His minister was wise, his brother valiant and himself a glorious warrior. With the king was a large army of horse and foot, chariots and elephants,<sup>1</sup> and numberless warriors eager for the fray. The king rejoiced as he inspected his army, and instruments of music blared tumultuously. Equipping his troops for a victorious campaign and fixing a propitious day, the king marched out with drums and trumpets; everywhere he fought numerous battles and conquered all other kings by force of arms. By the might of his arm he subdued the seven continents<sup>2</sup> and exacted tribute before he let their princes go. Thus at that time Pratāpabhānu became sole monarch of the whole round world.

[D. 154.] 'After subjecting the whole world to his rule by the might of his arm, he returned to his own city, and there, as occasion required, the monarch devoted himself to business, religious duties, love and other delights.

[C. 155.] 'Under the strong rule of king Pratāpabhānu the land became a glorious cow of plenty; for his people all was pleasure without pain, and men and women were handsome and virtuous. The minister, Dharmaruci, was devoted to Hari's feet and continually instructed the king in statecraft for his good. *Gurus*, gods, saints, ancestors and Brāhmans—to all these the king ever did service. All the duties of kingship enjoined by the Veda he practised with reverence and delight. Every day he gave liberal alms and listened to the holy Śāstras, the Vedas and the Purāṇas. In all the holy places he dug pools and wells and ponds, laid out flower-gardens and lovely parks, and built houses for the Brāhmans and magnificent and marvellous temples for the gods. [D. 155.] All the sacrifices prescribed by the Vedas and the Purāṇas the king zealously performed one after another, each a thousand times.

[C. 156.] 'The monarch was not ambitious for reward; he was a man of supreme wisdom and discernment. The duties he

<sup>1</sup> *caturviga*: lit. of the four divisions.

<sup>2</sup> *sapta dvīpa*: the seven *dvīpas* are situated round Mount Meru like the leaves encircling a lotus flower, each separated from the rest by a circumambient ocean. They are called Jambu, Plakṣa, Śālmali, Kuśa, Krauñca, Śīka and Puskara.

performed in word and deed and thought the wise king offered as a gift to Vāsudeva.

'One day the king mounted a noble steed, and making all preparations for the chase, rode out to the dense forest of Vindhya-cal and shot a number of graceful deer. As the king wandered in the woods, he spied a boar which looked as though Rāhu had seized the moon and hidden in the forest; the moon was too big for its mouth to contain it, yet in its fury it would not disgorge it. Such, as I have said, was the beauty of the boar's fearful tusks; as for its body, it was enormous and lusty beyond measure. When it heard the horse approaching, it grunted, pricked up its ears and watched alertly.

[D. 156.] 'When he saw the boar, huge as a purple mountain-peak, the king whipped up his horse and rode on at speed, challenging the beast, "Now you can't escape!"'

[C. 157.] 'When it saw the horse come pounding on, the boar fled like the wind. The king at once fitted an arrow to his bow, and, seeing the arrow, the boar crouched on the ground. The king took careful aim and shot the arrow, but the boar evaded it and escaped. The beast fled on, sometimes coming into sight and sometimes lying hid, and the king rode furiously after it. The boar ran far on into an impenetrable wood which neither elephant nor horse could enter. The king was quite alone and he found it difficult to make his way through the forest, but still he would not abandon the chase. Seeing that the king was very persistent, the boar fled on and ran into a deep mountain cave. When the king saw that the cave could not be entered, he turned back disappointed; but he had lost his way in the great forest. [D. 157.] Tired, hungry and thirsty, the king with his horse sought desperately for a river or a lake; he was faint for lack of water.'

[C. 158.] 'As he roamed the forest, he spied a hermitage where dwelt a prince in the false guise of a hermit; the king had seized his land and he had deserted his army and fled from the battle-field. Thinking that this was Pratāpabhānu's hour and that he himself had fallen on evil times, he was very despondent and did not return home, for he was too proud to make terms with the king. The prince nursed his wrath in his heart like a beggar and dwelt in the forest in ascetic dress. To him came the king, and he recognized him as Pratāpabhānu. Distracted by thirst, the king did not recognize the prince, but when he saw his holy garb, he

thought he must be some great sage. Dismounting, he did obeisance, but was wise enough not to announce his name.

[D. 158.] "Seeing that the king was thirsty, the hermit showed him a lake, and the king gladly bathed in it and drank of it, together with his horse. [C. 159.] Eased of all his weariness, the king was much refreshed. The ascetic took him to his own hermitage and gave him a seat, as the sun was setting, and then courteously addressed him: "Who are you, and why do you wander alone in the forest, fair youth as you are, caring naught for your life? You bear the marks of an emperor, and the sight of you arouses my sincere compassion."

"Hearken, great sage," said the king; "there is a monarch called Pratāpabhanu and I am his minister. I lost my way while hunting and by great good fortune fell in with you. For me such a meeting is a rare and happy chance; hence I believe there is some good in store for me."

"My son," said the hermit, "it grows dark and your city is distant some two hundred leagues. [D. 159a.] Listen and be prudent; the night is dark, the forest is dense and there is no path; then stay here today and go on your way at daybreak."

[159b.] (As destiny decrees, so help appears; either it comes to a man itself or leads him away to safety.)

[C. 160.] "Very well, lord," said the king, and did what he wished. He tied his horse to a tree and took his seat. The king gave all praise to the hermit, and doing homage to his feet, congratulated himself on his good fortune. He then addressed him with gentle courtesy: "Lord, I make a presumptuous request, as of a father; treat me, great sage, as your son and servant and tell me, lord, your name." For the king did not know the hermit though the hermit knew the king. The king was simple-minded and the hermit a master of deceit; he was the king's enemy; moreover, of the warrior caste and a prince, and he was bent on furthering his own ends by force or fraud. The enemy remembered the pleasures of his princedom and was sad, and his heart burned within him like a furnace. When he heard the king's simple question, he called to mind his resentment and was glad. [D. 160.] Softly he uttered scheming and guileful words: "My name now is Mendicant, for I have neither money nor home."

[C. 161.] "Wise mystics like yourself," said the king, "free from all self-conceit, habitually conceal their personality. Their highest good they find in the adoption of lowly guise. That is why saints

and scripture proclaim that the perfectly destitute are dear to Hari. Mendicants like yourself, without money or home, raise doubts in the minds of Brahmā and Śiva.<sup>1</sup> But whatever you may be, I reverence your feet; now, master, be gracious to me."

'When the hermit marked the monarch's simple devotion and perfect trust in him, he brought the king entirely under his influence and said with a show of great affection, "Hearken, O king, while I tell you the truth. [D. 161a.] I have for a long time dwelt here, and till now no one has been to see me, nor have I made myself known to any; for worldly reputation is like a fire that burns up the forest of penance."

[S. 161b.] (Not merely fools but even clever men are misled by a fair appearance. Consider a beautiful peacock; its song is ambrosial, but it feeds on snakes.)

[C. 162.] "'That is why I remain hidden in the world and have no concern with any save Hari. The Lord knows all without being told; tell me, what perfection can be attained by pleasing the world? You are pure of heart and of wise judgement and very dear to me; you love me, too, and trust me; now, my son, it would be very wrong indeed of me to hide anything from you."

'The more the ascetic spoke of his detachment, the greater grew the king's belief in him. When the hypocritical ascetic saw that the king had submitted thought, word and deed to his influence, he said, "Brother, my name is Ekatantu." At the word the king bowed his head and said again, "Explain to me, as to your own dear servant, the meaning of that name."

[D. 162.] "'In the beginning, when the world was created, I was born, and since that time I have worn no other body; that is why I am called One-body. [C. 163.] My son, marvel not in your heart; penance renders all easy of attainment. By the power of penance Brahmā creates the world; by the power of penance Visnu preserves it; by the power of penance Śambhu destroys it; there is nothing in the world that cannot be accomplished by penance.'

'When the king heard this, he became devoted to him, and the hermit began to relate ancient legends. Many a story he told of action and religious duty, and expounded the meaning of detachment and wisdom. He recited at length stories of creation, preservation and dissolution, innumerable and marvellous. The

<sup>1</sup> i.e. as to whether there are true saints or ordinary beggars (*śikā*).

monarch, as he listened, yielded wholly to the ascetic's influence, and then proceeded to tell him his own name.

"I know you, O king," said the ascetic, "and I am glad you deceived me; [S. 163.] for mark me, O king, it is a rule of policy that sovereigns should not declare their names at random. I understand this caution of yours and hold you in very high esteem. [C. 164.] Your name is Pratāpabhānu and your father is king Satyaketu. By the favour of my *guru*, O king, I know all things, but I do not think it to my interest to say all I know. My son, when I saw the simplicity of your nature, your love and trust and skill in policy, I conceived a deep affection for you, and when you asked me, I told you my story. Now I am pleased with you; doubt it not! Ask any boon you will, O king."

The king was glad when he heard his gracious words; he clasped his feet with many a humble prayer. "O gracious sage," he said, "the sight of you has brought the four rewards within my grasp; yet, now that I see my lord is pleased, I will crave a boon hard to grant, that nothing may be lacking to my perfect happiness. [D. 164.] "May my body be free from old age, death and pain; may none conquer me in battle; may my kingdom endure for a hundred aeons on the earth, under my sole sway, untroubled by an enemy."

[C. 165.] "So be it, O king," said the ascetic; "but there is one difficulty to be overcome; hear what it is. All save the race of Brāhmans, O sovereign, even Time himself, shall bow the head before your feet; but by the power of penance Brāhmans are always mighty and no one can protect men from their wrath. If, O king, you can subdue the Brāhmans, then Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa will be subject to your will. With both arms raised I tell you truly, violence is of no avail against the Brāhmans. Hearken, O sovereign! If you can avoid the Brāhmans' curse, you will never at any time be destroyed."

The king was delighted when he heard the hermit's words. "Lord," he said, "now I shall never be undone; by your favour, gracious lord, I shall be for ever blessed."

[D. 165.] "May it be so," said the false and guileful hermit, and added, "But if you tell anyone how you lost your way and met with me, then mine is not the blame. [C. 166.] The reason why I forbid you, king, is that great harm will come to you if you reveal it. I tell you—and what I say is true—that when three have heard of your adventures, you will be utterly undone,

Hearken, Pratāpabhānu ! If you divulge this secret, or if a Brāhmaṇa curse you, you will be ruined. By no other means, not even if Hari and Hara should be angry with you, will you meet death."

"True, lord," said the king, clasping his feet; "tell me, who can protect a man from the wrath of a Brāhmaṇa or a *guru* ? If Brahmā be angry, the *guru* can protect him, but if he quarrel with the *guru*, there is no one in the world who can save him. May I perish if I do not do your bidding ! I am not anxious about that; but, lord, there is only one thing that I fear; a Brāhmaṇa's curse is very dreadful ! [D. 166.] Tell me of your grace by what means the Brāhmaṇas may be brought under my power; I know none save yourself, O lord of compassion, to befriend me."

[C. 167.] "Hearken, O king," said the hermit; "there are many means to this end in the world, but they are hard to compass, and moreover, their effect is uncertain; yet is there one method very easy to practise, though herein, too, there is one difficulty; for that scheme depends on me, O king, and it is impossible for me to go to your city. Ever since I was born, up to the present day, I have never entered the house or village of any man. But if I do not go, your end will not be accomplished; here is a dilemma."

To this the king persuasively replied, "Lord, the Vedas have laid down this precept, that the great should be kind to the small. Mountains always grow grass on their summits; the unfathomable ocean bears foam upon its surface, and the earth ever carries dust upon its head." [D. 167.] With these words the monarch clasped his feet and cried, "Master, be gracious ! Lord, endure this trouble for my sake; for you are good and compassionate to the humble."

[C. 168.] Perceiving that the king relied on him completely, the ascetic, skilled in guile, replied, "Hearken, O king; I tell you truly there is nothing in the world I cannot do. Assuredly I will compass your end, for you are my faithful disciple in thought and word and deed. But the power of magical schemes and penance and spells only then bears fruit when they are practised in secret. If I prepare the food, O king, and you serve it, and no one knows who I am, then all who partake of the meal will become subservient to your will. Moreover, one who takes food at their homes —believe me, O king—will also become subject to your power. Go, king, and carry out the following plan, and persevere in it for a whole year.

[D. 168.] "Every day invite a fresh company of a hundred thousand Brāhmaṇas with their families; and day by day, as long

as your resolve endures, I shall prepare the meal. [C. 169.] In this way, O king, with very little trouble all the Brāhmans will become subject to your will. The Brāhmans will offer burnt offerings and perform sacrifices and ritual worship, and by this means the gods too will easily fall under your sway. There is one other point I must make plain to you; I shall never come in this guise. By my own magic I shall steal away your household priest, O king; by the power of penance I shall make him like myself and keep him here for the space of one year, and—hearken, O king—I shall put on his form and further your ends in every way.

"Now, sire, sleep, for the night is far spent; we shall meet three days from now. By the power of penance I shall convey you and your horse to your home while you are still asleep. [D. 169.] I shall come in the form of which I spoke, and you will recognize me when I send for you privately and repeat to you all that we have said."

[C. 170.] 'The king went to sleep as the hermit bade him, and the false mystic went and sat down. The king was tired and slept very soundly, but how could the hermit sleep? He sat there in deep thought. Then came to him there the demon Kālaketu, who had led the king astray in the form of a boar. He was an intimate friend of the ascetic prince and a master of countless devious wiles. He had had a hundred sons and ten brothers, very wicked, invincible, and a torment to the gods; all these the king some time ago had slain in battle, because he saw that Brāhmans, saints and gods were in distress. This villain remembered his earlier resentment and devised a plot with the royal anchorite. They thought out a plan for the destruction of their foe; but the king knew nothing of all this, for he was in the hand of fate.'

[D. 170.] (An active enemy should not be lightly regarded, even though he be alone; Rāhu to this day vexes the sun and moon, though he has nothing left but a head.)

[C. 171.] 'When the ascetic prince saw his friend, he was relieved, and rose and greeted him with pleasure. He told his ally the whole story, and the demon exclaimed in delight, "Listen, prince; if you follow my instructions, I'll deal with the king. Now you can sleep without anxiety; God has cured your sickness without the use of drugs. I shall sweep away the enemy, root and branch, with all his house, and four days hence I shall come and see you again." He completely reassured the ascetic prince and departed full of fury, that master of intrigue.

'He conveyed Pratāpabhānu and his horse to the palace in a moment, and placing the king to sleep by his queen, tied up the horse securely in the stable. [D. 171.] He then carried off the king's priest and set him in a mountain cave, bemusing him by magic, while he himself took the form of the priest [C. 172.] and went and lay down on his luxurious couch.

'The king awoke before dawn and was much astonished to find himself at home, brought, as he supposed, by the hermit's supernatural power. He got up and went out so that the queen should not know. Mounting the same horse, he rode out into the forest, and no man or woman of the city knew what had happened. In the afternoon the king returned, and in every house there were rejoicings and welcoming strains of music. When the king saw the priest, he recalled all that had happened and was astonished. Three days passed for the king like an age; his thoughts were fixed on the false hermit's feet. At the appointed time the priest came and, as he had forewarned him, told the king all that had been arranged.

[D. 172.] 'The king was glad when he recognized him as the *guru*—for illusion had robbed him of perception—and at once invited a hundred thousand noble Brāhmans with their families.

[C. 173.] 'The priest cooked food of the six flavours and the four kinds,<sup>1</sup> as prescribed in the Vedas. He prepared a magic meal, with more condiments than one could count. He cooked the flesh of all kinds of animals, and the scoundrel mingled with them the flesh of Brāhmans. Then he summoned all the Brāhmans to the banquet, washed their feet and courteously assigned them seats. But as soon as ever the king began to serve the food, there came a voice from heaven, "Arise, arise, ye Brāhmans, and go home! Eat not the food; it were deadly sin! There is Brāhma's flesh in the dish!" All the Brāhmans believed the voice and arose; the king was distraught and utterly confounded; slave of fate, he could not utter one word.

[D. 173.] 'Then cried the Brāhmans in a fury—nor did they stay to reflect: "Go, senseless king, and be born as a demon, you and all your household! [C. 174.] Lowest of Kṣatriyas, you invited Brāhmans and their families in order to ruin them, but God has

<sup>1</sup> The six flavours are: *madhura*, sweet; *amla*, sour; *lavana*, salt; *katu*, pungent; *tikta*, bitter; *kaṣāya*, astringent.

The four kinds are: *bhakṣya*, for mastication; *bhojya*, for deglutition; *caśya*, for sucking; *lekyā*, for lapping.

preserved our caste purity ! It is you and your household who will go to perdition ! Within one year you shall be destroyed; there shall remain in your house not one to give you water !"

"When the king heard the curse, he was beside himself with terror. Then there came a gracious voice from heaven: "O ye Brāhmans, you have cursed him without due reflection; the king has committed no offence at all !" All the Brāhmans were amazed when they heard the heavenly voice. The king went to the kitchen, but there was no food there nor could the Brāhma cook be found. He returned deep in thought and told the Brāhmans the whole story; distressed and afraid, he fell to the earth.

[D. 174.] "O king, what will be will be, even though the fault be not yours. The Brāhmans' curse is very dreadful and nothing can avert it !" [C. 175.] So saying, all the Brāhmans departed.

'When the people of the city heard the news, they grieved sore and blamed fate that had purposed a swan and made it a crow. The demon conveyed the priest to the palace and told the ascetic all that had taken place. That villain dispatched letters to every quarter, and all the princes equipped their armies and made an assault on the city. They blew their trumpets and besieged the town, and battles of all kinds were fought without cessation. All the king's warriors wrought valiant feats of arms and were slain; the king, too, and his brother fell on the field of battle. Not one was left of all the house of Satyaketu; how can a Brāhma's curse be made of none effect ? After conquering their enemy all the princes re-established the city and returned to their own States, celebrating a glorious triumph.

[D. 175.] 'Hearken, Bharadvāja ! When God would work a man ill, dust is like Mount Meru, a father like the god of death, a rope like a snake.

[C. 176.] 'Listen, sage; in due time this king and all his household were born as demons of the night. He had ten heads and twenty arms; his name was Rāvan, a formidable and valiant warrior. The king's younger brother, whose name was Arimardana, was born as Kumbhakarṇa the stalwart; his minister, Dharmaruci by name, became his younger half-brother; he was called Vibhisan, a name known to all the world, a votary of Viṣṇu and a store of divine wisdom; and all the king's sons and servants were born as very fearful demons. Villains of every type they were, assuming any form at will, wicked, grim and ignorant, merciless, injurious, sinners all, tormentors of the universe—indescribable ! [D. 176.]

Though sprung from the house of Pulastyā, pure, stainless and incomparable, yet by the power of the Brāhmans' curse they all became of evil form.

[C. 177.] 'All three brothers practised various austerities, inexpressibly severe. Brahmā marked their penance and approached them, saying, "My sons, you have found favour in my sight; ask for boons." The Ten-headed humbly clasped his feet and said, "Hear me, Lord of the world! I would die at the hand of none save man or monkey, these two breeds!" Brahmā and I together granted that boon, saying, "So be it, for you have performed strict penance." Then the Lord drew near to Kumbhakarna and he was astonished to behold him; he thought, "If this wretch goes on eating perpetually, the whole world will be laid waste." So he sent Sāradā to influence him to folly, so that he asked for six months of sleep. [D. 177.] Next, he went to Vibhiṣan and said, "Ask a boon, my son." He asked for pure devotion to the lotus feet of the Blessed Lord.

[C. 178.] 'After granting them these boons Brahmā departed, and they returned to their own home rejoicing. Now Maya had a daughter, Mandodari by name, exceeding beautiful, ornament of womankind. Maya brought her and gave her to Rāvan, well aware that he would be king of the demons. Rāvan was delighted at winning so lovely a wife, and he then arranged marriages for his two brothers.

'On a certain Mount Trikūta, standing in mid ocean, there was a very strong fortress built by Brahmā. That fortress the demon Maya refashioned, with countless golden palaces set with jewels. Such an abode as is Bhogāvatī for the race of serpents, or Amarāvatī for Indra, or even more charming and splendid than these, was the fortress, known to the world by the name of Laṅkā.

[D. 178a.] 'On all four sides very deep sea-moats encircled it, and four strong walls of jewel-studded gold, whose fashioning no man could describe. [178b.] Whatever demon rules in every aeon by Hari's will dwells there, brave, powerful and matchless in might, together with his host. [C. 179.] Great demon warriors had dwelt there formerly, but the gods had slain them all in battle. Now by the will of Indra there dwelt there a myriad guardians of the lord of the Yaksas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Supernatural attendants on Kuvera, guardians of his treasure. Various accounts are given of their origin; sometimes they are depicted as harmless, inoffensive beings, sometimes as terrible and malignant.

'When the Ten-headed chanced to learn this, he equipped his army and went and besieged the fort; and when they saw the terrible warrior and his huge forces, the Yakṣas fled for their lives. The Ten-headed went round, examining the whole city; no care had he now, he was perfectly happy. The fort, he thought, was beautiful and naturally inaccessible; so Rāvan made it his capital. He assigned houses to all the demons, to each according to his desert, and made them happy. One day he attacked Kuvera and carried off the car Puṣpaka as a trophy. [D. 179.] On another occasion he went and lifted up Kailāsa for fun, testing, as it were, the strength of his arm, and then went off delighted.

[C. 180.] 'Pleasure, wealth, sons, troops and allies, victory, power, might, intelligence and renown—all these grew ever greater, as greed increases with every fresh gain. And what a brother was the mighty Kumbhakarṇa! There was none born in the world who could match him in valour. After a draught of wine he would sleep for six months, and when he awoke the three spheres trembled for fear. If he had taken food every day, the whole world would soon have been left bare. He was inexpressibly resolute in battle, and the city held countless such stalwart warriors as he. Meghanāda was Rāvan's eldest son, in the first rank of the world's warriors; none could face him on the field of battle, and the gods ever fled before him in panic.

[D. 180.] 'There, too, were Kumukha, Akāmpana, Kuliśarada, Dhūmaketu, Atikāya and other such doughty warriors, each capable of conquering the world. [C. 181.] All these could put on any form at will and were versed in black magic; they never dreamed of righteousness or pity.

'One day the Ten-headed was seated in his court and looked upon his countless attendants, his sons and grandsons, servants and retainers in multitudes, a demon brood that none could number. Looking on his hosts with all his inveterate arrogance, the demon passionately and proudly addressed them: "Give ear, all ye demon troops! The hosts of heaven are our enemies. They dare not fight us face to face, but flee when they see their mighty foe. There is only one way to bring about their death, and that I shall now explain; so listen to what I say. Go you and obstruct the Brāhmans' feasts—their sacrifices, burnt offerings and funeral obsequies. [D. 181.] Wasted with hunger and drained of strength, the gods will forthwith come out to meet me; then I

shall either slay them or reduce them utterly to subjection before I let them go."

[C. 182.] 'Then he sent for Meghanāda and gave him his instructions and encouraged him to display his might and hostility to the gods. "All those gods," he said, "who are resolute and strong in battle, and who are self-confident enough to fight, vanquish on the field, bind them and bring them here!"' His son arose, obedient to his father's command. In like manner he gave orders to all and himself marched out, mace in hand. The earth reeled as the Ten-headed advanced, and when he roared, the wives of the gods gave premature birth; and when they heard that Rāvan was approaching in wrath, the gods sought safety in the caves of Mount Meru. The Ten-headed found all the glorious spheres of the guardians of the quarters deserted. Roaring fiercely like a lion again and again, he challenged the gods to combat with torrents of abuse. Intoxicated with battle-fury, he ran wild about the world, seeking a champion to match him in battle, but nowhere did he find one.

'Sun and Moon and Wind, Varuna and Kuvera, Fire and Time and Yama and all that bear rule, Kinnaras and adepts, men, gods and serpents—all these he pertinaciously pursued. Every living creature, male or female, in all God's creation fell into the power of the ten-headed demon. All in terror did his bidding and ever came to bow suppliant at his feet.'

[D. 182a.] 'By the strength of his arm he subdued the world and left no being free. Rāvan reigned supreme and none could say him nay. Many were the fair and noble women he wedded, [182b.] daughters of gods and Yakṣas, Gandharvas and men, Kinnaras and serpents, winning them by the might of his arm.'

[C. 183.] 'Whatever order he gave to Indrajit he carried out, as it were, before he was bidden. Now hear the deeds of those to whom he first gave commands. Fearful to behold and sinners all, the demon host, tormentors of the gods, a devilish crew, assumed all kinds of shapes by magic power and worked their outrages. Their every act defied the Vedic law, that righteousness might be rooted out. In whatsoever land they found cows and Brāhmans, there they set fire to city and village and town. Morality was nowhere practised; no respect was paid to god, Brāhmaṇ or *guru*; there was no devotion to Hari, or sacrifice or penance or knowledge; Veda and Purāṇa were never heard.'

[Ch. 18.] 'Did the Ten-headed hear of prayer, asceticism, continence, penance or sacrifice offered to the gods, himself would up and run to bring them to an end and utterly destroy them in a frenzy. So corrupt was conduct in the world that no mention of righteousness was heard, and on any who repeated Veda or Purāna he inflicted various tortures and banished them from the land.

[S. 183.] 'No words can describe the dreadful iniquity the demons wrought; their great ambition was to hurt; what limit could there be to their ill-doing? [C. 184.] Evil-doers flourished; thieves and gamblers and lechers who coveted their neighbours' goods and wives; those, too, who honoured not mother or father or gods, and compelled the good to serve them. People who act thus, Bhavāni, hold thou to be like demons!

'When she saw the exceeding enfeeblement of righteousness, Earth was panic-stricken and sore distressed. She thought, "The burden of mountains, rivers and seas weighs not so heavy upon me as this one oppressor of mankind." She saw all right perverted, but could say nought for dread of Rāvan. Deeply she pondered; then, taking the form of a cow, went there where gods and sages were assembled. Weeping, she told her tale of woe, but none of them could help her.

[Ch. 19.] 'Gods and sages and Gandharvas went all together to Brahmā's realm. With them went Earth in bodily form as a cow, piteous, in great distress and sad affright. When Brahmā learnt the whole matter, he pondered and said, "I can do nought; but the immortal Lord, whose servant you are, will help both you and me. [S. 184.] Take courage, Earth," said Brahmā, "and think on Hari's feet. The Lord knows the pain of his people and will shatter this cruel tyranny."

[C. 185.] 'All the gods sat and thought, "Where is the Lord to be found that we may make our cry to him?" One said, "We must go to Vaikuntha." Another, "The Lord dwells on the Ocean of Milk." The Lord manifests himself to man just exactly according to the measure of faith and love in his heart. I, too, Girijā, was present in that assembly and found occasion to say a word: "Hari is all-pervading, present everywhere alike, and is revealed by love—this I know. Tell me any place, time or quarter of the world where the Lord is not. He pervades all things that rest or move, the Lord, apart and passionless, and is revealed, like fire,<sup>1</sup> by love." My words pleased them all, and Brahmā said, "True! True!"

<sup>1</sup> As fire is everywhere present, unmanifest, and is revealed by friction.

[D. 185.] ‘Brahmā was glad to hear my words; he felt a thrill of joy, and tears coursed from his eyes. Then calmly and quietly he folded his hands and sang this song of praise:

[Ch. 20.] “Glory, glory to the Lord of lords, who bringeth blessing to the faithful, protector of the suppliant! Glory to the beloved spouse of Ocean’s daughter, friend of cows and Brāhmans, foe of demons! Guardian of gods and earth, none can fathom the secret of his wondrous acts. It is his nature to show mercy and have pity on the poor; so may he be gracious unto us!

“Glory, glory to the imperishable, who dwelleth in every heart, all-pervading, highest bliss, incomprehensible, transcending sense, of deeds most holy, untouched by illusion, Mukunda!

“Thou whom the company of sages, set free from ignorance, contemplates day and night in a passionless ecstasy of love, singing thy many perfections—to thee, True Being, Consciousness and Bliss, be glory!

“May he who with none to aid him brought to birth threefold creation,<sup>1</sup> the enemy of sin, take thought on our distress; we know no faith or way of worship!

“O thou who dost dispel the terrors of existence and delight the souls of saints and bring all troubles to an end, the whole company of gods, abandoning skill of speech, in thought and word and deed flees to thee for refuge!

“May he whom Śāradā, scripture, Śeṣa and all the seers cannot comprehend, he to whom the humble are dear—so declare the Vedas—even the Lord our God, have mercy upon us!

“O Mandara to churn the sea of birth and death, in all ways beautiful, shrine of perfection, pure delight, sage, adept and every god in dire affright do reverence to thy lotus feet, O Lord!”

[D. 186.] Perceiving that the gods and Earth were afraid and hearing their loving plea, the Lord uttered these solemn words from heaven to dispel their anxiety and doubt:

[C. 186.] “Fear not, ye sages, adepts and high gods! For your sakes I will assume the form of man and with all my parts take human form in the noble Solar race. Kaśyapa and Aditi performed severe penance, and I promised them a boon long since. They have become manifest as Daśarath and Kausalyā, a royal pair in the city of Kosala. In their house I shall become incarnate as four brothers, princes of the line of Raghu. I shall bring to fulfil-

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the three *gunas*; see Introd., p. xxiii.

ment the word of Nārada and descend to earth with my high consort. I shall relieve the whole earth of its burden; be not afraid, O company of gods!"

'When they heard the divine voice from heaven, the gods were comforted and straightway returned; then Brahmā consoled Earth, and she was no more afraid but confident.

[D. 187.] 'Brahmā instructed the gods each to take on earth the form of a monkey and wait on the feet of Hari, and then returned to his own sphere. [C. 187.] All the gods departed to their several homes; they and Earth were at rest.

The gods made no delay in gladly carrying out the command that Brahmā had given them. They assumed the form of monkeys on the earth, of unequalled strength and power, all mighty warriors, with mountains, trees and claws for weapons. They waited patiently for the coming of Hari; everywhere on the hills and in the forests they massed, marshalling their valiant troops.

'So far have I related all these glorious acts; now hear what I have left untold.

*The Story of Rāma*

In the city of Avadh there reigned a great king of the house of Raghu, whose name was Daśarath, renowned in the Veda, upholder of righteousness; virtue and wisdom were his, and in his heart and soul dévotion to Visnu.

[D. 188.] Kausalyā and his other beloved wives were all of chaste behaviour and obedient to their lord, devoted to the lotus feet of Hari with meek and steadfast love.

[C. 188.] One day the king was feeling disconsolate because he had no son. Swift to his *guru*'s house went the sovereign, touched his feet and made earnest petition. He told the *guru* all his joys and sorrows, and Vasiṣṭha said all he could to comfort him: 'Be of good cheer; you will have four sons, famed in the three worlds, who will relieve the faithful of their fears.' Vasiṣṭha summoned Śringī the seer and caused an auspicious sacrifice to be performed for the birth of a son. When the sage devoutly offered the burnt-offering, Agni was made manifest, bearing in his hand the oblation. He said, 'All that Vasiṣṭha has purposed in his heart is accomplished according to your desire. Go, king, divide this offering and distribute the parts in due proportion.'

[D. 189.] Then the Fire god vanished, after addressing the whole assembly. The king was in an ecstasy of bliss; his heart could not contain his joy.

[C. 189.] Next, the king summoned his beloved wives, and Kausalyā and the rest came to him. Half of the offering he gave to Kausalyā, and divided the remaining half into two parts. To Kaikeyī the king gave one; the rest he halved again. He placed the two halves in the hands of Kausalyā and Kaikeyī and so gave them to Sumitrā to her great delight. In this way all the queens became great with child, and profound was the joy and gladness of their hearts.

From the day when Hari entered the womb all the worlds were filled with pleasure and prosperity. All the queens shone glorious in the palace, mines of beauty, virtue and splendour. Some little time passed in happiness, and then the hour drew nigh when the Lord would be revealed.

[D. 190.] Auspicious were the planets in their conjunction, the day of the week and of the month; all creation rejoiced, for the birth of Rāma was the source of joy.

[C. 190.] It was on the ninth day of the holy month of Caitra,<sup>1</sup> when the moon was waxing, under Abhijit,<sup>2</sup> beloved of Hari, at noon, when the air was neither cold nor hot, a holy time when all the world is resting; cool, mild and fragrant breezes were blowing; gods rejoiced and saints were enraptured; the forests blossomed and all the hills were bright with gems, and from every river poured forth an ambrosial stream.

When Brahmā knew the hour had come, came all the gods, preparing each his chariot. The spotless heaven was thronged with the host of deities, and the company of Gandharvas sang his glories. They rained down lovely flowers in handfuls, and the sky reechoed to the joyous throb of drums. Serpents, sages and gods sang hymns of praise and each in many a fashion offered him his worship.

[D. 191.] So with humble reverence the throng of gods returned each to his dwelling-place. The Lord, the world's abode, in whom all worlds find rest, was manifest!

[Ch. 21.] The Lord, gracious and plenteous in mercy, was revealed to bless Kausalyā. His mother contemplated with rapture the wondrous beauty that captivates the hearts of sages; his cloud-dark body, lovely to behold; his four arms, bearing each its weapon; decked with a garland of forest flowers; large-eyed ocean of beauty, the demons' foe. Folding her hands, she said,

<sup>1</sup> *madhu* or *caitra*: March-April.

<sup>2</sup> *abhijit*: the 21st *nakṣatra*, or lunar asterism.

'How may I praise thee, infinite Lord? Veda and Purāna declare thee beyond illusion, nature's elements and knowledge, immeasurable. Thou whom scriptures and saints hymn as the ocean of mercy and joy now for my weal art manifest, Lakṣmi's spouse who lovest thy faithful people! Full many a universe, created by illusion, dwells in thy every hair—so say the Vedas—yet didst thou rest in my womb—a jest to disturb the minds of the most sober when they hear it!'

The Lord smiled when such knowledge dawned on his mother's mind; he would perform all kinds of marvellous acts; he declared and related to his mother the beautiful stories of his earlier lives that she might love him as her son. Again his mother cried—for her brain was reeling, 'Abandon this form, dear boy! Play thy childish games, most lovable! No joy can equal this.' Thereupon the wise Lord of lords became a child and began to cry.

Those who sing these acts find the feet of Hari nor fall into the well of birth and death. [D. 192.] For the sake of Brāhmans and cows and gods and saints he came down to earth as a man, in a body formed of his own will, he who transcends illusion, the elements of nature and the senses.

[C. 191.] When they heard the charming sound of a baby's cries, all the queens came in anxious haste. This way and that ran their happy handmaids, and all the dwellers in the city were in ecstasies. When Daśarath heard of the birth of his son, his joy was like the joy of the blessed; in his soul was love supreme and he trembled with delight. He would have risen, but composed himself and said, 'The Lord whose very name it is a blessing to hear has come into my house!' The heart of the king was filled with perfect bliss as he summoned minstrels to play their music. An invitation was sent to the *guru* Vasistha, who came to the king's door with a company of Brāhmans. They came and looked upon the peerless child, the fullness of whose beauty and perfection cannot be declared.

[D. 193.] Then the king performed the Nāndimukha Śrāddha<sup>1</sup> and all the ceremonies of birth<sup>2</sup> and gave the Brāhmans gold and cows and raiment and jewels.

<sup>1</sup> An offering of meat-balls made to nine departed ancestors as a preliminary to any joyous festival.

<sup>2</sup> The *jātakarma saṃskāra* is performed by the father when the navel-string is cut. He touches the child's tongue with *ghī* and other substances specially prepared, with appropriate prayers.

[C. 192.] The city was one mass of flags and banners and triumphal arches, an indescribable blaze of splendour; flowers rained down from heaven, and all were lost in heavenly bliss. Women came in crowds; they got up and ran to see him just as they were. They came singing to the royal palace with golden vessels in their hands and platters filled with all that was auspicious. They waved the lights and offerings about his head and cast their gifts before him; time after time they fell at the infant's feet. Panegyrists and bards and eulogists and minstrels sang the spotless perfections of Raghunāyak. Everyone gave all that he had as gifts, and those who received them did not keep them for themselves. Musk and sandal and saffron lay thick as mud in all the city streets. In every house sounded strains of happy welcome, [D. 194.] for the source of beauty had been revealed; and all the men and women of the city everywhere were wild with joy.

[C. 193.] Kaikeyī and Sumitrā also gave birth to beautiful sons. Neither Śāradā nor the Serpent King could describe the joyful crowds that graced that happy occasion. The city of Avadh shone resplendent, as though Night had come to see the Lord, and, abashed when she looked upon the sun, had yet taken thought and become twilight. The plentiful clouds of incense were her gloom, and the powder that flew through the air her redness. The heaps of jewels in the houses were the stars and the dome of the royal palace the brilliant moon. The sweet sound of Vedic recitation in the royal house was the cheeping of birds at eventide. Beholding this display, the sun forgot to move; it did not notice that a month was passing. [D. 195.] The day was a month long, but no one observed the mystery. The sun paused in his chariot; then how could there be night? [G. 194.] No one observed the mystery, and at last the sun moved on, singing the virtues of Rāma.

After watching the celebrations gods and sages and serpents returned to their homes, praising their good fortune. Now listen, Girijā, while I tell you another secret that concerns myself, for your soul is steadfastly devout. Kākabhuṣundi and I were there together, but in human form so that no one recognized us; in an ecstasy of bliss and affectionate delight we wandered through the streets, rapt and absorbed; but only he on whom the grace of Rāma has been shed can comprehend this sacred experience.

On that occasion the king gave all who came—come as they might—all that their hearts desired. Elephants, chariots, horses,

gold, cows and diamonds the king bestowed on them, and all kinds of raiment. [D. 196.] He satisfied them all, and on all sides they called down blessings on his head: 'Long live all your sons, the lords of Tulasi Dās!'

[C. 195.] Some days were spent in this fashion; day and night passed by unnoticed. Then the king perceived that the naming-day was come and sent for the wise sage. The king did him reverence and spoke as follows: 'Name them, O sage, as you have determined.' 'O king,' said the sage, 'many and marvellous are their names, but I will name them according to the measure of my understanding. He who is the sum of joy and the ocean of bliss, one drop of which gladdens the three spheres, that home of "delight" shall be called Rāma, a name that shall bring peace to all the worlds. He who "upholds" and cherishes the universe shall be named Bharat; and he the very thought of whom spells "destruction to his foes" shall be called Śatruघna, a name renowned in the Veda.' [D. 197.] On him who bore the marks of character and fortune, beloved of Rāma and the world's support, the *guru* Vasiṣṭha bestowed the noble name of Laksman.<sup>1</sup> [C. 196.] These names the *guru* gave, profoundly pondering, and said, 'O king, your four sons are the true essence of the Veda, the wealth of sages, the all in all of the faithful, the vital breath of Śiva!'

The children delighted themselves in boyish games; from childhood Laksman adored the feet of Rāma as his own friend and lord. The two brothers, Bharat and Śatruघna, offered such devotion as servants gladly offer to their master. Of each of the two handsome pairs one was dark, one fair, and when their mothers looked upon their beauty, they broke a blade of grass.<sup>2</sup> In all four brothers dwelt lovingkindness, beauty and virtue, but the source of greatest joy was Rāma. In his heart shone the light of the moon of grace and its beams were his fascinating smiles. Now on her lap, now in his fair cradle, his mother would fondle him and call him 'little darling'.

[D. 198.] The all-pervading Absolute, emotionless, impersonal, caring not for diversion, uncreated, lay in Kausalyā's lap, bound by the bonds of love and devotion.

[C. 197.] The beauty of a myriad Loves adorned his body, dark as the dark-blue lotus or a rain-burdened cloud, and the brightness

<sup>1</sup> As from *lakṣaṇa*, the special marks denoting character and foretelling fortune.

<sup>2</sup> In order to avert the evil eye.

of the nails on his rosy lotus feet was like the gleam of pearls on a water-lily's leaves. Beauteous were the marks of the thunder-bolt, the banner and the goad; sages were charmed when they heard the tinkle of his anklets. He wore a girdle round his waist; his stomach was creased in triple fold and deep his navel—this must be seen to be believed! His long arms were decked with many a gem, and tiger-claws shone splendid over his heart; on his breast lay a jewelled necklace and the sparkle of diamonds; there, too, was the mark of the Brāhmaṇa's foot,<sup>1</sup> a sight to charm the soul. His neck was marked like the conch, and his chin most lovely, and on his face dwelt the beauty of unnumbered Loves. His even teeth and ruddy lips, his nose and the caste-mark on his forehead, who can rightly describe? His ears were beautiful and his cheeks most fair, his lisping prattle dear and sweet. Lustrous and curling was his hair, as yet uncut, that his mother dressed with loving tendance. It was pretty to see him crawling on hands and knees, clad in his little yellow tunic. Neither scripture nor Śeṣa can describe his beauty; only he may grasp it who has seen it in a dream. [D. 199.] Very Bliss, transcending all illusion, knowledge, speech and sense, subject to his parents' perfect love, he played the part of an innocent child.

[C. 198.] Thus Rāma, father and mother of the world, delighted the inhabitants of the city of Kosala; and those, Bhavāṇī, who have devoutly adored the feet of Raghuṇāth experience this same blessing. But who that opposes Raghuṇāti, try as he may, can be freed from the bonds of birth and death? Illusion herself, who has exercised power over all created things, fears the Lord, who by the play of his eyebrows makes her dance. Tell me, who should be worshipped save such a Lord as this? Raghuṇāti will show favour only to those who worship him in perfect simplicity of thought and word and deed.

Thus the Lord played his childish tricks and delighted all who dwelt in the city. At one time Kausalyā would dandle him on her knees, and at another would lay him in the cradle and rock him. [D. 200.] Lost in love, Kausalyā noticed not the passing of day and night; utterly possessed by love for her son, his mother sang of his childish acts.

[C. 199.] One day his mother bathed and dressed him and put him to sleep in his cradle. Then she too bathed, preparing to

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Bhṛigu.

worship the Blessed Lord, the patron deity of her house. When his mother had worshipped and offered her oblation, she went to the place where she had prepared the sacrificial meal, and when she returned to the place of worship, she saw her son eating the oblation. His mother ran off alarmed to her babe and saw him sleeping there as before. She came back and saw her son again. Her heart beat fast and she was all unstrung. She saw two boys, one here, one there! She thought, 'Is my mind all astray, or is there some other explanation ?'

When Rāma saw his mother so perplexed, the Lord smiled sweetly and laughed. [D. 201.] He displayed to his mother his own wondrous form, indivisible. A myriad universes she beheld set on every hair; numberless suns and moons, Śivas and Brahmās, [C. 200.] many a mountain and river, sea, land and wood; time, destiny, the three constituents, knowledge and nature—all that she had ever heard of! When she beheld the mystic vision, she stood in dire alarm with folded hands. She saw the soul that illusion makes to dance; she saw the faith that sets it free. She felt a thrill of awe; no words came from her lips. She closed her eyes and bowed her head before his feet. Seeing his mother lost in amazement, Kharāri once again became a child; but she could not sing his praises for very fear. She thought, 'I held the Father of the world to be my son!' Earnestly Hari warned his mother, 'Hear me, mother! Nowhere repeat what you have seen!' [D. 202.] Again and again Kausalyā humbly besought him with folded hands, 'Never again, O Lord, may thy magic power affect me with its influence!'

[C. 201.] Hari played all kinds of childish tricks and delighted his servants. Some little time passed and all the brothers grew up, bringing happiness to all in the house. The *guru* came and ceremonially cut their locks, and again the Brāhmans received many gifts. The four boys ran about amusing themselves in countless very charming ways. The Lord, whose thoughts and words and deeds no sense can comprehend, played about in Daśarath's courtyard. When the king summoned him at meal-times, he would not leave his boy companions and come. When Kausalyā went to call him, the Lord would toddle off and run away; him whom the Veda calls 'Not thus', him who Śiva regards as infinite, his mother would run to catch in spite of his struggles. He would come with his body covered with grime and dust, and the king with a smile would take him on his lap. [D. 203.] At

his meals he would find a chance to run off mischievously this way or that with a scream of joy, his face besmeared with curds and rice. [C. 202.] Śāradā, Śesa, Śambhu and the Vedas have sung of his innocent, charming, childish games. In vain has God created those whose hearts they do not move to love. As soon as the brothers were all grown up, their *guru* and father and mother invested them with the sacred thread. Raghurāī went to the *guru*'s house to study and in a short time mastered all the arts. It was a good jest that Hari, whose natural breath was the four Vedas, should study them! They became skilled in the sciences and modesty and virtue and chivalry, and practised all the sports a prince should know. How beautiful were the bow and arrows in their hands! All creation was enchanted to behold their loveliness, and men and women all paused to gaze in rapture as they passed through the streets where the brothers played their games. [D. 204.] All who dwelt in the city of Kosala, men and women, old and young, loved the gracious Rāma more than their own lives.

[C. 203.] Rāma would summon and take with him his brothers and comrades and go out every day to hunt in the woods. Marking the finest beasts, he would slay them and show his prey day by day to the king. Those animals which were slain by Rāma's arrows quitted their bodies and went straight to heaven. He would take his meals with his younger brothers and companions and was subject to his parents' bidding. The gracious Lord did all he could to please the people of the city. He listened attentively to the recital of Veda and Purāṇa, and then himself repeated and expounded them to his brothers. Raghunāth would get up early in the morning, and after bowing before his parents and his *guru*, and taking their permission, would engage in the business of the city. The king was delighted to see his way of life.

[D. 205.] The all-pervading, without parts or passions, unborn, impersonal, without name or form, performed wondrous acts of every kind for the sake of the faithful.

[C. 204.] So far I have told of all he did; now listen attentively to the story that follows. The great and wise sage Viśvāmitra dwelt in the forest, deeming it a holy retreat, and there he prayed and sacrificed and practised austerities. But he feared exceedingly Mārica and Subāhu, for as soon as these demons saw the sacrifice, they rushed at him and did violent outrage that grieved the sage. Gādhi's son reflected anxiously that these iniquitous demons could not be slain without the help of Hari. Then the great sage

bethought him that the Lord had become incarnate to relieve earth of its burdens. He thought, 'I will make this excuse to go and see his feet, and make request and bring away the two brothers; thus shall I feast my eyes on the Lord, in whom all knowledge and detachment and virtue dwell.'

[D. 206.] So anxious was he to attain his end that he lost no time on the journey. He bathed in Sarayū's stream and went to the royal palace. [C. 205.] When the king heard that the sage was coming, he went to meet him with a company of Brāhmans. He fell prostrate before him and greeted him with respect and brought him in and seated him on his own throne. He washed his feet and did him every reverence, saying, 'None is so blessed as I this day!' He had all kinds of food set before him, and the high sage was greatly pleased. Then the king brought his four sons into his presence, and when he saw Rāma, the sage was stupefied, and lost himself in wonder at the beauty of his face, as the partridge is ravished at the sight of the full moon. Then the king, glad at heart, addressed him. 'O sage,' he said, 'never before have you done me such a favour. With what purpose have you come? Tell me, and I shall lose no time in furthering your end.'

'A band of demons is tormenting me,' said the sage; 'I have come, O king, to make a request. Give me Raghunāth and his younger brother, that by the slaughter of these demons I may be preserved. [D. 207.] Give me them cheerfully, O king, and cherish no unwise doubts; thereby you, sire, will gain fair fame and the merit of duty done, and they a blessing.'

[C. 206.] When the king heard this unwelcome speech, his heart beat fast and his face grew pale. 'Brāhmaṇ,' he said, 'I have begotten four sons in my old age; you have spoken without due reflection. Ask of me land or cows or wealth or treasure; gladly will I give you my all this day. There is naught dearer than body or life; these, O sage, will I give you without a moment's thought. But all my sons are dear to me as life; O saint, I cannot give you Rāma! How can my handsome little son face those fierce and cruel demons?'

The wise sage was exceeding glad to hear the king's affectionate reply. Then Vasiṣṭha said much to reassure the king so that his doubts were resolved. Submissively he sent for his two sons and clasped them to his heart and gave them much good advice. 'Lord,' he said, 'my two sons are my life; you, O sage, are their father, you and no other!'

[D. 208a.] The king blessed his sons with many a blessing and entrusted them to the seer. Then the Lord went to his mother's chamber, bowed his head before her feet and departed. [208b.] Gladly the two lion-like warriors went forth to relieve the sage of fear, oceans of grace, resolute, primal causes of the whole universe. [C. 207.] With dawn-bright eyes, broad chest, long arms, and body dark as the dark-blue lotus or *tamāla*,<sup>1</sup> girt about the loins with yellow cloth, at his side a fair quiver and in either hand a charming bow and arrows—so went Rāma with his brother, a comely pair, one dark, one fair, a priceless treasure that Viśvāmitra had won. ‘Now I know,’ he thought, ‘that the Lord is the devoted friend of Brāhmans, for the Blessed Lord has left his father for my sake.’

As they went on, the sage pointed out Tārakā, and when she heard him, she rushed up in a rage. With a single arrow the Lord took her life, and granted her in pity a place in his own realm. Then, though the seer was well aware that his Lord was the treasure-house of wisdom, he taught him wisdom, how he might suffer neither hunger nor thirst and enjoy matchless bodily strength and radiant vigour. [D. 209.] He entrusted to the Lord every weapon and brought him into his own hermitage, where he devoutly gave him bulbs and roots and fruit to eat; for he knew that he wished him well.

[C. 208.] When day dawned, Raghuरā said to the sage, ‘Go and perform the sacrifice unafraid.’ The company of hermits began to offer the oblation, while he himself stood on guard over the sacrifice. When that foe of the sages, the demon Mārīca, heard of it, he made a furious onslaught with his army to aid him. Rāma struck him with a headless arrow and he was carried a thousand miles beyond the sea. Next, he slew Subāhu with an arrow of fire, and his younger brother massacred the demon host. Thus they slew the demons and freed the Brāhmans from fear, and the whole company of gods and sages sang their praises. Raghuरā stayed there a few more days and showed kindness to the Brāhmans, who for very love related a number of stories from the Purāṇas, although the Lord knew them already. Then the sage respectfully suggested that the Lord should go and witness a certain ceremony. When the Lord of the house of Raghu heard of the contest of the bow, he gladly set out with the great sage.

<sup>1</sup> *tamāla*: *Garcinia xanthochymus* a tree with very dark bark and white blossoms.

On the way a hermitage came in view, where was no bird or beast or any living creature. The Lord noticed a rock and asked the sage about it, and he told him the whole story in detail. [D. 210.] 'Gautama's wife,' he said, 'was turned into a stone by a curse, and is patiently awaiting the dust of your lotus feet. Have mercy on her, Raghubir !'

[Ch. 22.] At the touch of the pure and grief-destroying feet verily the penitent wife regained her form. She looked on Raghu-nāyak, joy of the faithful, and stood before him with folded hands. All unstrung and trembling with love, she uttered not a word; blessed beyond all women, she clung to his feet, and from both her eyes fell a shower of tears. Calming herself, she recognized the Lord, and by the grace of Raghupati won to faith in him. With words of purest praise she framed her speech:

'Glory to Raghurāi, whom only wisdom may reveal! I am a sinful woman and thou, Lord, cleansest the world of sin, Rāvan's foe, joy of the faithful! O lotus-eyed saviour from the terror of rebirth, save me, save me! I come to thee for refuge! Well was it that the sage pronounced the curse; I count it as a blessing, for now I feast my eyes on Hari, deliverer from birth and death, a vision Śāmkara regards as highest gain. Lord, this is my prayer; a simple-minded woman, O Lord, I ask no other boon; may my soul like a bee sip the honey of devotion to the dust of thy lotus feet! Those feet wherfrom the all-holy Gaṅgā sprang, those feet which Śiva placed upon his head, those feet which Brahmā reverences, Hari the merciful has placed upon my head!'

Thus did the wife of Gautama, falling again and again at Hari's feet, win the boon she most desired and depart rejoicing to her lord's abode.

[D. 211.] (Such a friend of the lowly is the Lord Hari, so causeless his mercy! Win free from the toils of deceit, O fool, and worship only him!)

[C. 209.] Rāma and Lakṣman went on with the sage and came to the world-purifying Gaṅgā. The son of Gādhi told them the whole story of how the celestial river came to earth. Then the Lord bathed with the seers, and the Brāhmaṇas received manifold gifts. Gladly he went on with the company of sages and soon drew near to the city of Videha. When Rāma beheld the beauty of the city, he and his brother were delighted beyond measure. Many a pond and well and river and lake were there, with ambrosial water and jewelled steps. Drunk with honey, bees sweetly

murmured, and birds of varied plumage sang melodiously. There, too, blossomed lotuses of many hues, and pleasant breezes blew, cool, mild and fragrant; [D. 212.] and all about the city were lovely flower-gardens, parks and groves, with flowers and fruits and beauteous leaves, the haunt of many a bird.

[C. 210.] Inexpressible was the beauty of the city; go where one might, the soul was captivated. Fine markets and wondrous jewelled balconies, such as Brahmā might have built with his own hands; thriving traders, rich as Kuvera, sat in their shops, displaying a variety of wares; handsome squares and well-planned streets were continually being sprinkled with fragrant perfumes. The houses of all were delightful, painted as Kāmadeva might have painted them. The men and women of the city were graceful, pure and good, wise and accomplished. Even the gods stood astounded to behold the luxurious splendour of Janak's incomparable palace. The surrounding walls were an amazing sight; it seemed as though they had pressed into service the beauty of all the worlds. All kinds of jewelled doors of gold, [D. 213.] fair-fashioned, adorned the glittering palaces; the beauty of the splendid house where Sītā dwelt defies description. [C. 211.] At all the handsome gateways were doors that gleamed with diamonds,<sup>1</sup> thronged by princes, acrobats, panegyrists and poets; and there were spacious stables for horses and elephants, at all hours crowded with horses and elephants and chariots. Many were the warriors, ministers and captains, and the houses of all were like royal palaces.

Here and there, outside the city, by lake or river, a number of princes had pitched their tents. Seeing a pleasant mango-grove, providing all comfort and altogether charming, Viśvāmitra said, 'Here, I fancy, is the spot where we should stay, wise Raghubir.' 'Very well, master,' replied the gracious Lord, and alighted there with the company of sages.

When the king of Mithilā heard the tidings that the great sage Viśvāmitra had arrived, [D. 214.] he came with his loyal ministers, a company of warriors, noble Brāhmans, his *guru* and his kinsmen, to meet the chief of sages, glad at heart. [C. 212.] He placed his head upon the sage's feet and did obeisance, and the lord of sages gladly blessed him. Then the king did respectful homage to all the Brāhmans and rejoiced at his good fortune. Viśvāmitra

<sup>1</sup> *kulisakapādā*: or, doors massive as thunderbolts.

repeatedly asked after the king's health and conducted him to a seat; and just at that moment the two brothers, who had gone to look at the garden, returned, one dark, one fair, in the flower of their youth, a delight to the eyes, stealing the hearts of all the world.

All rose when Raghupati entered, and Viśvāmitra seated him by his own side. All were happy when they saw the two brothers; their eyes filled with tears and they trembled with emotion. Gazing on the image of sweetness and beauty, Janak lost all consciousness of self.<sup>1</sup> [D. 215.] Though he felt overwhelmed by love, the king discreetly composed himself, and bowing to the sage, addressed him in solemn tones, inarticulate with emotion:

[C. 213.] 'Tell me, lord, are these two handsome lads the ornaments of a line of sages, or the supporters of a royal house? Or has the Absolute, which the Vedas call "Not thus" come to earth in dual form? Though my soul is by nature indifferent to desire, yet is it entranced as the partridge by the moon. Therefore, lord, I ask you in all sincerity; tell me, lord, and hide it not from me; for when I look upon these brothers, love overpowers me and I am constrained to forget the joys of heaven.'

'Truly have you spoken, O king,' said the sage with a smile: 'your words are never false; these are beloved of all that draw breath.' (Rāma smiled to himself when he heard these words.) 'They are the sons of Daśarath, jewel of the house of Raghu, and the king has sent them with me to do me a service. [D. 216.] They are Rāma and Laksman, two noble brothers, in whom dwell beauty, chivalry and might; and all the world is witness that they vanquished the demons in battle and preserved my sacrifice.'

[C. 214.] 'Sage,' said the king, 'the sight of your feet is an unspeakable blessing, the reward of the merit I have earned. These two handsome brothers, one dark, one fair, bring bliss to Bliss herself! The pure love they bear to one another is beautiful to see; it delights the soul, but cannot be described in words. Believe me, lord,' cried Janak in rapture, 'their mutual love is close as the Absolute to the individual soul!'

The king gazed time and again at the Lord with a thrill of emotion and passionate devotion in his heart. Then the monarch praised the sage and bowed before him and escorted him to the

<sup>1</sup> *bhayau bidhu bidehu biset*: this is a play on words. Videha (Janak) became *videha* (separated from the body).

city. There the king assigned to him a fair apartment, pleasant at all seasons, and after doing him worshipful service, took his leave and returned to his own palace.

[D. 217.] The Lord, the jewel of the house of Raghu, took his meal and rested with the seers and sat down with his brother. It was late afternoon, [C. 215.] and Laksman was very anxious to go and view Janak's city, but he stood in awe of the Lord, and moreover hesitated to ask permission of the sage; so he remained silent, smiling to himself. Rāma read his brother's thoughts and his heart swelled with affection for his votary. He smiled with the utmost humility and modesty, and asking the *guru* for leave to speak, said, 'Lord, Laksman wishes to see the city but owing to his respect for you he hesitates to speak out. If you grant permission, I will show him the city and bring him back very soon.'

To this the high sage affectionately replied, 'Rāma, how could you do aught but what is right? My child, it is you who guard the bounds of duty and, constrained by love, bring joy to those who serve you. [D. 218.] Go, you two brothers, in whom all joy is stored, and view the city. Show your fair faces and delight the eyes of all.'

[C. 216.] Doing homage to the sage's lotus feet, the two brothers went off, gladdening the eyes of all. A crowd of children, beholding their extreme beauty, accompanied them, fascinated by the sight. They were clad in yellow garments, with quivers hanging from their belts; fair bows and arrows graced their hands; an enchanting pair, one dark, one fair, their brows marked with sandal to match their hues; with lion-like necks and long arms, and a string of elephant-pearsls very lovely on their breasts; with eyes like fair red lotus blossoms and faces like the moon to cure the three evils; with golden earrings hanging from their ears, so lovely as to ravish the souls of all beholders; with eyes sweetly glancing and eyebrows fair and arched, and foreheads marked with the caste-mark as though stamped on Beauty herself. Pretty four-cornered caps decked their comely heads, [D. 219.] and their hair was dark and curly. From head to foot the two brothers were beautiful with a beauty suited to every limb and feature.

[C. 217.] When the citizens heard the news that the princes had come to see the city, they all left their houses and their work and came running like beggars that run to spoil a treasury; and when they saw the native beauty of the two brothers, they were enraptured and their eyes were gladdened. The young women

gathered at the lattice-windows of their houses and gazed with passion on Rāma's graceful form.

Lovingly they spoke to one another: 'Sister, these outrival in charm ten million Kāmadevas; never has such loveliness been heard of among gods or men or demons or serpents or sages. Viṣṇu has four arms and Brahmā four faces; Purāṇi has five faces and dreadful guise; but, sister, there is no deity of them all with whose form the loveliness of these can be compared. [D. 220.] They are in the prime of youth, very homes of beauty, one dark, one fair, abodes of joy; myriads and myriads of Loves must be lavished on their every limb! [C. 218.] Tell me, sister, what living creature is there who would not be enchanted at the sight of such beauty?'

Another said gently and affectionately, 'Hear, wise maiden, what I have heard. These two princes are the sons of Daśarath, a pair graceful as young swans. These are they who preserved the sage Viśvāmitra's sacrifice and slew the demons on the battle-field. He of the dark body and fair lotus eyes, who crushed the pride of Mārīca and Subāhu, is Kausalyā's son, the source of joy; his name is Rāma, and he bears his bow and arrows in his hands. The fair youth, clad in beauteous garb, who follows Rāma with bow and arrows in his hands, is Rāma's younger brother, Lakṣman; and hear me, sister, his mother is Sumitrā. [D. 221.] The two brothers have accomplished the Brāhmaṇa's purpose, and after delivering the sage's wife on the way, have now come to witness the contest of the bow.' Hearing this, all the women were delighted. [C. 219.] Gazing on Rāma's beauty, another maiden said, 'This is a bridegroom meet for Jānaki! If the king sees him, sister, he will be bound to break his vow and give her to him in marriage.'

Another said, 'The king has already recognized him and given him courteous welcome with the sage; but, maiden, the king does not abjure his vow; he is compelled by fate to persist in his un-wisdom.'

Said another, 'If God be good, and, as we are told, grant each the reward he merits, Jānaki will win him for a husband; there is no doubt of this, my friend. If fate decrees that this union should take place, the desire of all will be fulfilled. Therefore, sister, I am most anxious that he should come one day with such a purpose; [D. 222.] otherwise—believe me, maiden—it will not be easy for us to see him; it is only when we have won much merit from the deeds of our former lives that we can enjoy such intimacy.'

[C. 220.] 'Sister,' said another, 'what you say is true; such a wedding would please everyone'; and another, 'Śāmkara's bow is hard to bend, and this dark prince is but a youth of delicate frame. Wise maiden, the whole issue lies in doubt.' To this another quietly replied, 'Sister, there are those who say that he looks frail but his strength is great. If Ahalyā, that great sinner, found salvation by touching the dust of his lotus feet, will he ever rest content till he has broken Śiva's bow? This we must believe and doubt not for a moment. That Creator who so skilfully fashioned Sītā also took thought to form for her this dark-hued husband.' They were all delighted by her speech and murmured, 'So may it be!'

[D. 223.] The whole company of maidens, bright-eyed and fair of face, joyously scattered flowers, and wherever the two brothers went, all was pure delight.

[C. 221.] The two brothers went towards the eastern quarter of the city where the ground had been prepared for the contest of the bow. There was a broad expanse of well-paved earth, whereon a fair and spotless altar had been built. All around the arena a broad golden platform had been set to seat the princes, and close behind, on all four sides, a second circle of resplendent seats, a little raised and gorgeously adorned, on which the citizens might come and sit. Near them had been erected spacious pavilions, gleaming white and painted in diverse hues, where all the ladies might sit and watch, in due degree according to the rank of their families. The children of the city kept pleasantly explaining and courteously pointing out the arrangements to the Lord; [D. 224.] and with this excuse all the children affectionately touched their charming persons and felt a thrill of heartfelt joy as they gazed and gazed on the two brothers.

[C. 222.] Perceiving the devotion of the children, Rāma affectionately praised the buildings. Each called them to look at what he most admired, and in loving response the two brothers went to see the sights. With soft and gentle and pleasant words Rāma showed the preparations to his brother; that merciful Lord, at whose command illusion fashions the whole world in the twinkling of an eye, for the love of his people gazed with astonishment at the arena of the contest of the bow. After viewing the spectacle, they returned to the *guru*, for it was late and they dreaded his displeasure. Thus he in awe of whom Fear itself is afraid displayed

the mighty power of devotion. With soft and gentle and kindly words he constrained the children to take their leave.

[D. 225.] Then with awe and love and meekness the two brothers modestly bowed their heads before their *guru's* lotus feet and with his leave sat down.

[C. 223.] When night fell, at the sage's bidding they all offered the evening prayer; and half the pleasant night passed in the telling of ancient tales and histories. Then the great sage retired to rest, and the two brothers began to rub his feet, even they for the touch of whose lotus feet ascetics practise all manner of prayer and austerities. Those two brothers, overpowered by love, affectionately pressed their *guru's* lotus feet. When the sage had repeatedly bidden them cease, Raghubar went to his couch to sleep. With awe and love Laksman took his feet to his breast and rubbed them, and great was the delight he felt. Again and again the Lord said, 'Sleep, dear brother,' and he lay down with the lotus feet in his bosom.

[D. 226.] When the night was spent and he heard the crowing of the cock, Laksman arose; and before the *guru*, awoke wise Rāma, Lord of the world.

[C. 224.] After performing all the rites of purification the two brothers went to bathe, and having said their daily prayers, bowed the head before the sage, and at the fit time went, with the *guru's* permission, to pluck flowers. They went out and saw the king's beautiful garden, where reigned enchanting spring. All sorts of lovely trees were growing there and creeper canopies of varied hue. So rich were they in tender leaf and fruit and flower as to shame by their luxuriance even the tree of Paradise. Birds were singing—cuckoo, koel, parrot and partridge—and graceful peacocks dancing. In the midst of the garden was a charming lake with handsome jewelled steps about it; on the clear water lay variegated lilies; water-fowl were uttering their notes, and there was a murmur of bees.

[D. 227.] The Lord and his brother were delighted when they beheld the garden and the lake. How lovely must that pleasure be that brings delight to Rāma!

[C. 225.] Entranced they looked all about them, and with the gardeners' permission began to gather leaves and flowers. At that same hour Sītā came there, sent by her mother to worship Girijā. With her came all her maidens, beautiful and clever, singing songs in ravishing tones. Close by the lake stood Girijā's splendid

shrine; no words can describe its enchanting loveliness. She bathed in the lake with her companions, and then with happy heart she went to Gauri's temple. With deep devotion she worshipped her and prayed her for a handsome spouse to match her beauty.

Meanwhile one of her maidens had left Sītā and wandered off to look at the flower-garden. She came and beheld the two brothers, and went back to Sītā, overpowered by love.

[D. 228.] When her companions saw that she was trembling with emotion, and that her eyes were full of tears, they all gently asked her to tell them why she was so happy.

[C. 226.] 'Two princes,' she said, 'young and altogether charming, have come to see the garden, one dark, one fair—how can I describe them? Speech cannot see, eyes cannot speak!'

The wise damsels all rejoiced to hear this, for they marked the deep longing in Sītā's heart. Said one, 'Maiden, they must be those same princes who, as I hear, arrived yesterday with the sage. They have both cast the spell of their entrancing beauty on the men and women of the city, and have so won their hearts that everyone everywhere speaks of their charm. We must certainly see them, for they are worth seeing!'

Sītā was delighted with her words and her eyes were restless to behold them. Bidding her dear companion lead the way, she went forth. None guessed the love that had been theirs of old.<sup>1</sup> [D. 229.] Sītā called to mind the words of Nārada,<sup>2</sup> and pure love was born in her bosom. Startled she looked this way and that like a frightened fawn.

[C. 227.] Hearing the tinkle of her bracelets and anklets and the bells on her girdle, Rāma pondered in his heart and said to Lakṣman, 'It sounds as though Love were beating his drum, ambitious to vanquish the world!' So saying, he turned and looked in that direction, and his eyes were fixed on Sītā's face as the partridge gazes on the moon. Motionless stayed his beauteous eyes, as though Nimi had deserted his eyelids in modest confusion. When he saw Sītā's beauty he was glad; he praised her in his heart but spoke no word. It was as though Brahmā had put forth all his creative skill and revealed it to the world. She made Beauty beautiful; she glowed in the house of loveliness as a flame burns

<sup>1</sup> Rāma being an incarnation of Viṣṇu and Sītā of Lakṣmī.

<sup>2</sup> Nārada had told Sītā that she would meet Rāma, her future husband, in the garden.

in a lamp. But poets have made all similes stale; to what can I compare Videha's daughter?

[D. 230.] Reflecting on Sītā's beauty and pondering on his own emotions, with pure sincerity the Lord spoke to his brother a word fitting to the hour:

[C. 228.] 'Dear brother, this is Janak's daughter, to win whom the contest of the bow is to be held. Her maidens have brought her to worship Gauri, and she walks in the garden and makes it bright. When I look on her ethereal beauty, my soul that is by nature pure is disturbed—God alone knows why! Mark me, brother, the throbbing of my side betokens fortune! Men of the house of Raghu never even in thought set foot upon the road of evil; that is their nature. So I feel perfect confidence, for I have never even dreamed of looking on another's wife. Few in the world are those honourable men who turn not their back on the foe in battle nor even in thought let their eyes rest on another's wife nor send a beggar empty away.'

[D. 231.] This he said to his brother, and his heart was ravished by Sītā's loveliness. He drank in the beauty of her face as the bee sips honey from the lotus.

[C. 229.] Anxiously Sītā looked all around, wondering where the princes had gone. Wherever she glanced with her fawn-like eyes, there seemed to rain down a shower of white lotus blooms. Then the maidens showed her the handsome princes, one dark, one fair, hidden by a creeper; and when she saw their graceful forms, her eyes were filled with longing, as glad as though they looked upon their treasure. Her eyes grew tired with gazing on Raghupati's beauty; even her eyelids ceased to move; she was faint with excess of love, like the partridge when she looks on the autumn moon. She drew Rāma into her heart by the pathway of her eyes and carefully closed on him the door of her eyelids. When her maidens saw that Sītā was mastered by love, naught could they say in their modest confusion.

[D. 232.] At that moment the two brothers came forth from the creeper-covered bower like two spotless moons cleaving the veil of a cloud. [C. 230.] None could be more handsome than the two gallant heroes, their bodies glowing like the dark-blue lotus and the golden. Side-locks shone fair on their heads, and among them clusters of flowery blossom. The caste-mark was on their brows, and beads of sweat gleamed bright. The beauty of fair jewels shadowed their ears; curved eyebrows, curly hair, eyes

flushed like newly-opened lotus buds. Comely were their chins and noses and cheeks; merry was their smile to win the heart; for the charm of their faces I have no words; the sight of it would put many a Love to shame. A necklace of jewels lay on their breasts; their graceful necks were like the conch; their arms were like the trunk of Love's young elephant, unmatched in might. Said one, 'The dark-hued prince, bearing in his left hand the flower-filled plate of leaves, O sister, is beautiful indeed!'

[D. 233.] The maidens were entranced as they gazed on the jewel of the Solar race; yellow-clad with lion-like waist, abode of loveliness and virtue.

[C. 231.] One wise maiden composed herself, and grasping Sītā's hand, addressed her: 'Meditate on Gaurī another time; why not look now on the princes?' Then Sītā shyly opened her eyes and saw before her the two lions of the house of Raghu. She looked on Rāma's graceful form from head to foot, and when she remembered her father's vow, she was greatly troubled.

When her damsels saw that Sītā was overcome, they were all dismayed and said, 'It has grown late.' One maiden said with a secret smile, 'We shall come again tomorrow at this same time.' When she heard this meaning speech, Sītā was abashed; it was late and she feared her mother's censure. Then with firm resolve she drew Rāma into her heart and turned to go; she knew her hand was at her father's disposal. [D. 234.] Pretending to look back at a deer or a bird or a tree, she turned again and again, and as each time she beheld the beauty of Raghbir, her love grew ever greater.

[C. 232.] Thinking how hard it was to break the bow of Śiva, she went silently sobbing on her way, and laid upon her heart his dark-hued image. When the Lord saw Jānaki departing, that mine of joy and love and beauty and virtue, then with the gentle ink of deep devotion he traced her fair form on the tablet of his soul.

Sītā returned to the temple of Bhavāni, and worshipping her feet, spoke with folded hands: 'Glory, glory to thee, O daughter of the king of the high mountains! Glory to thee, who gazest on the face of Maheśa as the partridge on the moon! Glory to thee, O mother of Ganeśa and Kārttikeya, O Mother of the world, whose body is the lightning-flash! Thou hast no beginning nor middle nor end; not even the Veda knows thy measureless power. Thou bringest the world to birth, upholdest and destroyest it; thou dost bewitch the universe and sport at will!' [D. 235.] Among

faithful wives who adore their husbands as gods thou art accounted chief, O Mother! Not a thousand Śāradās and Śeṣas can tell of thy measureless majesty! [C. 233.] O thou who grantest boons, beloved of Purāri, by virtue of service done to thee the four rewards are easy to win; gods, men and sages are all blessed, O goddess, in the adoration of thy lotus feet. Full well thou knowest my desire, O thou whose dwelling-place is in the hearts of all; wherefore I have not uttered it aloud.'

So spoke the princess of Videha and clasped her feet. Bhavāni yielded to her modesty and love; a garland slipped from her and the image smiled. Reverently Sītā placed the gracious gift upon her head, and Gauri spoke with a heart full of joy: 'Hearken, O Sītā, to my effectual blessing! Your heart's desire shall be fulfilled, for the word of Nārada is always true and certain of accomplishment. You shall win for a husband him on whom you have set your heart. [Ch. 23.] That handsome dark-hued prince, on whom you have set your heart, shall be your husband. In him is stored all wisdom and compassion; he knows your virtuous disposition and your love.'

When they heard the blessing thus pronounced by Gauri, Sītā and her maidens were overjoyed. She did reverence to Bhavāni again and yet again and returned to the palace with happy heart. [S. 236.] None can describe the joy in Sītā's heart when she knew that Gauri favoured her suit. Her left side began to throb, sure omen of happiness to come.

[C. 234.] Silently praising Sītā's beauty, the two brothers returned to their *guru*, and Rāma told Viśvāmitra all that had happened, for his nature was simple and straightforward. The sage received the flowers and offered worship, then blessed the two brothers with these words: 'May your desires be happily fulfilled!' Rāma and Lakṣman were glad when they heard his prayer. The wise and noble sage took his meal and began to relate some ancient stories; and when day was spent, the two brothers took leave of the *guru* and went to say their evening prayers. In the east the brilliant moon arose and Rāma rejoiced when he beheld how like she was to Sītā's face; but then he thought to himself that the moon could not compare with it.

[D. 237.] 'The moon is born of the ocean and poison is her brother;<sup>1</sup> by day she is lustreless and spotted. How can the poor

<sup>1</sup> Both came to the surface at the churning of ocean. See App., s.v. Viṣṇu.

wretched moon challenge comparison with Sītā's face? [C. 235.] She waxes and wanes and brings sorrow to women parted from their lovers, and Rāhu swallows her at his own appointed time. She brings woe to the cakavā and withers the lotus. Many, O moon, are your defects! Then to compare you with Sītā's face were to incur blame for a most improper fancy!

So, with the moon as his excuse, he lauded the beauty of Sītā's face, and realizing that the night was far advanced, returned to the *guru*. He did reverence to the sage's lotus feet, and with his permission retired to rest. When night was past, Raghunāyak awoke, and looking on his brother, thus addressed him: 'See, brother, day has dawned, day that brings joy to the lotus and the cakavā and all the world.' With folded hands Laksman uttered gentle words, designed to show forth the power of the Lord:

[D. 238.] 'At dawn of day the lilies fade and the starry host loses its brilliance, just as at word of your coming the kings wax faint. [C. 236.] The kings are all bright as the stars, but they cannot overcome the deep darkness of the bow. As lotuses, bees and cakavās and every kind of bird all rejoice when night is at an end, even so, Lord, will all your votaries be glad when the bow is broken. The sun has risen and the darkness is easily dispelled; the stars hide their faces and the world is ablaze with brilliant light. O Raghurāya, the rising of the sun figures forth to all the kings your mighty power. It is to display the greatness of the strength of your arms that the breaking of the bow has been ordained.'

The Lord smiled at his brother's words, then performed the purifying rites and bathed—he who was by nature pure; and after observing his daily duties went to his *guru* and bowed his comely head before his lotus feet.

Then Janak summoned Śatānanda and sent him swiftly to Viśvāmitra the sage. He came and presented Janak's humble prayer, and the sage gladly summoned the two brothers. [D. 239.] The Lord did homage to Śatānanda's feet and went and sat beside the *guru*. Then, 'Come, dear boy,' said the sage; 'Janak has sent for you. [C. 237.] You must go and witness Sītā's choice and see on whom God bestows this great honour.' 'Lord,' said Laksman, 'he to whom you grant your favour will be the worthy recipient of this glory.' All the sages were pleased when they heard this noble speech and joyfully gave him their blessing.

Then with the company of sages the gracious Lord went to view the arena prepared for the contest of the bow. The two brothers entered the field, and when the citizens heard the tidings, they all abandoned their household work and came, men and women, young and old, and children too. When Janak saw how mighty was the throng, he summoned all his trusty servants and said, 'Go speedily to all the people and give each one a fitting seat.' [D. 240.] So with gentle and courteous words they gave the men and women seats, the nobles and all of less degree, each according to his rank.

[C. 238.] Then came forth the royal princes, looking as though Beauty herself were dwelling in their persons; perfectly accomplished, skilled and gallant heroes of graceful form, one dark, one fair. Resplendent they shone in the assembly of kings, like two full moons amid a galaxy of stars; and each saw in the person of the Lord the reflection of his own disposition.

Warrior kings beheld him as Heroism incarnate; wicked princes were afraid when they saw the Lord as the dread image of the Terrible. There were demons, too, guilefully disguised as kings, and they looked on the Lord as manifest Doom. The citizens saw the two brothers as jewels of manhood, a sight to gladden the eyes. [D. 241.] Women beheld them with joy, each as she would desire, as though the Erotic had appeared in very matchless form. [C. 239.] To the learned the Lord appeared in his universal form, with many faces and hands and feet and eyes and heads. How did Janak's family see him? He seemed to them to be a noble kinsman and dear friend. The queens, as well as Videha, saw him as a child, and no one could describe the affection they felt. To contemplatives he appeared as Absolute Truth, quiet, pure, and ever radiant Light itself. The votaries of Hari beheld the two brothers as their own chosen deities, bestowing perfect bliss. The emotion with which Sītā looked on Rāma was a loving joy beyond expression; if she could not declare her heart's experience, how can any poet utter it? Thus each according to his character beheld the prince of Kosala.

[D. 242.] So shone the princes of Kosala in the midst of the assembly of kings, one dark, one fair, ravishing the eyes of the world.

[C. 240.] Natural and charming were their two forms; it were idle to compare them to ten million Kāmadevas. Their handsome faces were brighter than the autumn moon; their lotus eyes enchanted the soul; their sweet glances stole the heart of Love,

unspeakably delightful. Their cheeks were lovely, and earrings trembled in their ears; their chins and lips were beautiful, and soft their speech; their smiles more radiant than the moonbeams, their eyebrows curved, their noses bewitching. On their broad brows gleamed the caste-mark, and with their clustered locks no swarm of bees could vie. Square yellow caps adorned their heads, embroidered with the buds of flowers. Fair were the conch-like creases on their graceful necks, expressing the utmost beauty of the three worlds. [D. 243.] On their breasts lay well-wrought necklaces of elephant-pearls and garlands of *tulasī*; their shoulders were like bulls' shoulders and they stood like lions; their arms were long and powerful. [C. 241.] Quivers hung at their yellow-clothed sides; they carried arrows in their hands and bows on their strong left shoulders, and round their necks was the yellow sacred thread. From head to foot they were endued with perfect beauty. All who saw them were gladdened, and looked on them with steadfast gaze and eyes unmoved.

Janak was glad when he saw the two brothers. He went and clasped the sage's lotus feet, and humbly told him the legends of the bow<sup>1</sup> and showed him the whole arena. Wherever the two noble princes went, everyone gazed at them astounded. Each one saw Rāma looking towards himself, but no one realized that this was any special marvel. 'What perfect arrangements!' said the sage to the king, and the king was pleased and highly gratified.

[D. 244.] Among all the platforms there was one of special beauty, bright and spacious; there the sovereign seated the two brothers with the sage.

[C. 242.] When they saw the Lord, all the kings were in despair, as stars grow dim when the full moon is risen; for all were confident that Rāma would surely break the bow. 'Even though he break not Śiva's mighty bow,' they thought, 'Sitā will cast the garland on Rāma's breast. So, brothers, abandon all hope of glory, power, might and dignity, and return to your homes!' Other princes laughed when they heard these words, those who had no discernment and were blindly arrogant. 'Even though he break the bow,' they said, 'it will be hard for him to wed her; then who can marry the princess without breaking it? Though Death

<sup>1</sup> Commentators say that the *kathā* refers to events in various *kalpas* when Sitā easily moved Śiva's bow and Janak swore that he would give her in marriage to anyone who could break it.

himself oppose, we shall vanquish him in our battle for Sītā!' But other princes, prudent and pious votaries of Hari, smiled when they heard this and said, [S. 245.] 'Rāma will lay low the princes' pride and marry Sītā; who can conquer in battle Daśarath's stalwart sons? [C. 243.] Die not for naught with boasts upon your lips; can hunger be satisfied with imaginary sweets? Hearken to the advice we offer in all sincerity; recognize Sītā as Mother of the world; acknowledge Raghupati to be Father of the world and feast your eyes upon his beauty. Beautiful, bringers of joy, the sum of all perfections, these two brothers dwell in the heart of Śambhu. Why do you desert the sea of nectar that is near you and run to perish with your eyes on a mirage? Well, go and do what seems good to each of you; we for our part have won this day that for which we were born! With these words the good princes began to gaze with passionate love on Rāma's peerless form; the gods, too, mounted on their chariots, looked down on him from heaven and rained down flowers and sang melodious songs.

[D. 246.] Then—for the hour had come—Janak sent to summon Sītā, and all her wise and beautiful maidens reverently escorted her to the arena. [C. 244.] No tongue can describe the loveliness of Sītā, Mother of the world, mine of beauty and virtue. To me all similes seem worthless, appropriate as they are to the limbs of ordinary women. Who will employ these similes in the description of Sītā and be called a bad poet and incur infamy? If Sītā be compared to any woman, then where in the world is there a maiden so lovely? Sarasvatī has a glib tongue; Bhavāṇī is of one body with Śiva; Rati grieves sore that her husband is bodiless. How can Sītā be compared with Lakṣmī, who has for own brothers poison and strong drink? Though the ocean of nectar had been loveliness and the tortoise the form of God himself, though the rope had been beauty and Mount Mandara sentiment, and Kāma-deva had churned the sea with his own lotus hand, [D. 247.] though Lakṣmī had been thus born, source of beauty and bliss, yet would a poet hesitate to compare her with Sītā.<sup>1</sup>

[C. 245.] Her wise maidens were escorting her, singing songs in charming tones. Her delicate body was clad in a fair robe; Mother of the world was she, of rare and matchless beauty. Her maidens

<sup>1</sup> Much less could the comparison be made, the instruments used being what they were. Poison, wine and Lakṣmī were all produced at the churning of ocean.

had adorned her every limb with all the ornaments of grace and charm. When Sītā stepped into the arena, men and women were entranced at the sight of her lovely form. Delighted, the gods sounded their drums; the Apsarās sang songs and rained down flowers. The wreath of victory shone bright in her lotus hand. All the kings looked at her in amaze. Anxiously Sītā sought to see Rāma, and all the kings were fascinated. She saw the two brothers sitting by the sage, and on them her eyes were greedily fixed, for they had found their treasure.

[D. 248.] Sītā was abashed by the presence of the *gurus* and embarrassed at the sight of so large a company; but she laid Raghubir on her heart and turned her eyes towards her maidens.

[C. 246.] Men and women gazed with open eyes at the beauty of Rāma and the loveliness of Sītā; they all thought—but hesitated to utter their thoughts—and made their silent prayer to God: ‘Speedily, O God, rid Janak of his obstinacy and grant that he may think right thoughts, as we do, that the monarch may not scruple to abandon his pledge and give Sītā in marriage to Rāma. The world will approve and everyone be pleased. If he be stubborn, he will rue it bitterly in the end!’ All the people fervently desired it and thought, ‘The dark-hued prince is a worthy bridegroom for Sītā.’

Then Janak summoned the bards, and they came reciting the glories of his royal line. ‘Go,’ said the king, ‘and declare my vow.’ [D. 249.] The bards went off, and with great joy cried aloud, ‘Hearken, all ye sovereigns! We declare Videha’s pledge, and raise our arms on high to attest it! [C. 247.] The might of the princes’ arms is the moon, the bow of Śiva is Rāhu; all know how heavy it is and hard to bend. Rāvan and Vāna, those great and mighty warriors, but looked on the bow and crept silently away. Whoever in the company of kings this day breaks this inflexible bow of Purāri, him shall the princess of Videha of a surety wed forthwith, and he shall be master of the three worlds.’

When they heard the pledge, all the princes were anxious to make trial, and those who prided themselves on their prowess were greatly vexed. They girded up their loins and rose in haste, and bowing their heads to their patron deities, came forward. With flushed faces they looked closely at Śiva’s bow and grasped it; but all their efforts failed to raise it from the ground. Those princes who had some sense did not even approach it. [D. 250.] Those princes who were fools sullenly grasped the bow, but it

would not rise and they retired in confusion. It was as though the bow grew heavier and heavier as it felt the force of the warriors' arms.

[C. 248.] Then ten thousand princes, all together, essayed to lift it, but still it resisted their efforts. Śambhu's bow moved no more than the heart of a faithful wife at the allurements of a lecher. So all the kings were made ridiculous like an ascetic who renounces not the world. They retired, with their glory and renown and mighty valour worsted by the bow. Humiliated and despairing, the princes returned, each to his own company, and took their seats.

When Janak saw the princes, he was distressed and uttered angry-seeming words: 'Hearing the vow I made, all the princes of every continent have gathered here; gods, too, have come and demons, taking human form, and many a brave and valiant champion. [D. 251.] And yet it seems that Brahmā has not created one hero to break the bow and win a charming maiden, a mighty triumph and most glorious renown! [C. 249.] Say, who would not covet so great a prize? Yet no one has lifted Śāmkara's bow! Let alone lifting it or breaking it, my friends, none could even move it an inch from the ground! Now let no one proud of his prowess be angered if I hold that there are no heroes left on earth. Give up hope and return to your own homes. It is not the will of God that the princess of Videha should wed. I shall lose merit if I break my vow; so the maiden must remain a maiden—what can I do? Had I known, my friends, that there was no man in the world, I should not have made the vow and become a laughing-stock!'

When they heard Janak's outcry, the men and women all looked at Jānaki and were sad. But Lakṣman was furious and frowned; his lips trembled and his eyes were red with wrath. [D. 252.] Naught could he say for awe of Raghubir, but Janak's words were like an arrow in his heart. Then he bowed his head before Rāma's lotus feet and spoke in authoritative accents:

[C. 250.] 'In an assembly where anyone of the house of Raghu is present, no one may utter such rude words as Janak has uttered, though he knows that the jewel of the Raghu race is here. Hearken, sun of the lotus Solar race, I speak sincerely and in no boasting spirit; give me leave and I will lift the universe like a ball and smash it like an unbaked earthen jar! I can break Mount Mera like a radish! And what, Blessed Lord, is this rotten old bow to the

greatness of your sovereign might? So, Lord, bid me and I'll show you some sport; just watch me and I'll lift the bow like a lotus stalk and run off with it a hundred thousand miles! [D. 253.] In the strength of your glorious power, O Lord, I'll break it like a mushroom stem; and if I don't, I swear by my Lord's feet I'll never take bow and quiver in hand again!'

[C. 251.] When Lakṣman uttered these angry words, earth reeled and the elephants of the quarters<sup>1</sup> trembled. All the people and all the princes were afraid; in the heart of Sitā was joy, but Janak was abashed. The *guru*, Raghupati and all the sages felt a thrill of rapturous delight. Raghupati signed to Lakṣman to forbear and seated him affectionately by his side. Viśvāmitra, seeing that the right moment had arrived, said very lovingly, 'Arise, Rāma, and break the bow of Śiva, and put an end, dear boy, to Janak's distress.'

At the *guru*'s word Rāma bowed his head before his feet; in his heart was neither joy nor sorrow; he rose and stood there quite simply; more nobly he stood than a lion-cub. [D. 254.] When Raghubar rose and stood upon the dais, all the saints rejoiced and their eyes were filled with gladness, as lotuses blossom and bees are glad when the new-born sun rises over the mountains of the east. [C. 252.] Scattered like night were the princes' hopes; boasts fell unuttered, as stars no longer shine in their array. The proud princes were ashamed as lilies wither, and the guileful kings hid themselves like owls. The sages and the gods forgot their sorrows like the *cakarās*; they rained down flowers in token of reverence. Rāma did devout homage to his *guru*'s feet and begged leave of the sages; then the Lord of all the world strode forth as he was, stepping like a noble elephant, handsome and proud; and as Rāma went forth, all the men and women of the city felt a thrill of glad excitement. They did homage to the Fathers and the gods and recalled their own good deeds. 'If our merit,' they said, 'may exert any influence, then, O Lord Ganeśa, may Rāma break the bow like a lotus stem!'

[D. 255.] Sitā's mother looked affectionately at Rāma and called the maidens to her side; and sobbing in the throes of love, she spoke: [C. 253.] 'Maidens, all those who are called my friends

<sup>1</sup> *diggaja*: according to the Purāṇas an elephant stands as supporter and guardian at each of the eight quarters. Their names are: Airāvata, Pundarīka, Vāmanā, Kumuda, Añjana, Puspadañita, Sārvabhauma and Saptatikā.

are gazing at this spectacle, and none has remonstrated with the *guru*, saying, "He is but a child; it is ill done to be so overbold." Rāvan and Vāna did not even touch the bow, and all the princes, proud though they are, acknowledged their defeat; and this same bow he is giving into the hand of the prince! Can a cygnet lift Mount Mandara? The king, too, has lost all his discretion. Maidens, God's ways are inscrutable!

Then one discerning maiden gently replied, 'Think not lightly, O queen, of one who is possessed of power. What was Agastya in face of the boundless ocean? Yet he dried it up and won renown throughout the world. The orb of the sun is small to look at, yet when it rises, the darkness of the three worlds is put to flight. [D. 256.] Very short is the spell that controls Brahmā, Hari, Hara and all the gods; and a little goad masters a lordly elephant of mighty pride. [C. 254.] Kāmadeva has subdued to himself all the worlds with a bow and arrows of flowers. Remember this, lady, and put away your doubts. Believe me, O queen, Rāma will break the bow!'

When she heard the maiden's words, the queen doubted no longer; gone was her despondent mood, and she loved him all the more. Then the princess of Videha looked at Rāma and, fearful at heart, prayed to this god and to that. Distraught, she silently besought them: 'O Maheśa and Bhavāni, be gracious! Reward what service I have rendered you; be favourable and rob the bow of might! O Ganeśa, thou who art Lord of hosts and giver of good gifts, it is for this day that I have done thee service! Hear my prayer, O hear my prayer, and make the bow very light!'

[D. 257.] Repeatedly looking towards Raghubir, she took courage and prayed to the gods; her eyes were filled with tears of love and she trembled with emotion. [C. 255.] She gazed her fill on his beauty, but when she called to mind her father's vow, she once again fell into melancholy. 'Alas!' she cried. 'Cruel is the oath by which my father stands, with no thought for good or evil consequence! His ministers are afraid and not one advises him—a scandal where the learned are gathered together! Here is the bow, harder to break than a thunderbolt, and there a young prince, dark and delicate of frame! O God, how can I be calm? Can a diamond be pierced by a *sirasa*<sup>1</sup> blossom? The whole assembly

<sup>1</sup> *sirasa*: *Acaia* (or *Mimosa*) *sirisa*, with white, fragrant, very delicate flowers.

have lost their wits! Now, O bow of Śambhu, my only hope is in thee; cast thy solid weight upon the people, and look on Raghupati and be light!

Sitā's heart was consumed with grief, and a moment of time seemed a hundred ages in the passing. [D. 258.] She looked at the Lord, and again at the ground, and her restless eyes glistened like Love's two fishes swinging in the orb of the moon. [C. 256.] Her voice lay imprisoned in her mouth as a bee in the lotus; checked from coming forth by modesty, as the bee by the sight of night. Tears stood in the corners of her eyes like a niggardly miser's gold. Yet she was ashamed of her anxious agitation, and composing herself felt confident and thought, 'If my plighted troth be true in thought and word and deed, if my heart be sincerely enamoured of Raghupati's lotus feet, then the Blessed Lord who dwells in the hearts of all will make me Raghubar's handmaid; for those who love each other truly will of a surety be united.' She looked upon the Lord and dedicated her life to his love,<sup>1</sup> and the gracious Lord knew all that was in her heart. He looked at Sitā and then at the bow, as Garuḍ might look at a tiny snake.

[D. 259.] When Lakṣman saw that the jewel of the house of Raghu was looking at Hara's bow, he trembled with excitement, stamped on the earth and cried, [C. 257.] 'O ye elephants of the quarters, O tortoise, serpent and boar, take courage and hold fast the earth that it move not! For Rāma is about to break the bow of Śāmkara; hear my bidding and be alert!'

When Rāma drew near to the bow, men and women prayed to the gods and recalled the merit their deeds had won. The doubts and ignorance of all, the arrogance of the stupid princes, the weight of Bhṛigupati's pride, the cowardly fears of gods and high sages, Sitā's anxiety and Janak's remorse and the consuming fire of the queens' anguish all boarded in a mass the great boat of Śambhu's bow, desiring to cross the boundless ocean of Rāma's strength of arm, with no helmsman to steer them.

[D. 260.] Rāma looked at all the people; they seemed to him like painted pictures. Then the gracious Lord glanced at Sitā and perceived that she was deeply moved. [C. 258.] He saw that the princess of Videha was deeply moved and that for her a moment seemed to pass like an aeon. When a thirsty man perishes

<sup>1</sup> *prema tana phāṇū*: the pīṭaka explains, 'she resolved that her body should be for ever his or perish'.

for want of water, of what use is a lake of nectar to him when he is dead ? Of what use is rain when the whole crop has withered ? What avails repentance when an opportunity has been lost ? Such were the Lord's reflections when he looked on Jānaki, and he felt a thrill of joy as he marked her marvellous devotion. Doing mental obeisance to his *guru*, he took up the bow with the utmost ease; it gleamed like a flash of lightning when he grasped it, and again became like the rounded vault of heaven. All stood watching, but none could see him grasp it, raise it and draw it tight. In that moment Rāma broke the bow in half, and the dread, harsh crash resounded through the worlds.

[Ch. 24.] So dread, so harsh a crash resounded through the worlds that the sun's horses left their path and strayed, the elephants of the quarters trumpeted, earth shook, and the serpent, the boar and the tortoise floundered in disquiet. Gods, demons and sages all stopped their ears with their hands in an anxious wonder; but when they heard that Rāma had broken the bow, they uttered cries of triumph. [S. 261.] Śamkara's bow was the boat and the ocean was the strength of Raghubar's arm, and the whole throng of those infatuated kings who first had embarked was drowned.

[C. 259.] The Lord hurled the two halves of the bow on the ground and all the onlookers were overjoyed. In the pure ocean of Viśvāmitra's heart the unfathomable water of love shone crystal clear. He looked on Rāma with ecstasy, as waves swell high when they look upon the moon. Triumphant music sounded in the sky; celestial nymphs sang songs and danced. Brahmā and all the gods, adepts and high sages praised the Lord and blessed him; they rained down garlands of many-coloured flowers; the Kinnaras sang melodious songs. The world was filled with shouts of victory —scarce was heard the noise of the breaking of the bow ! Men and women everywhere rejoicing cried, 'Rāma has broken Śambhu's mighty bow !'

[D. 262.] Bards, panegyrists and rhapsodists sang enthusiastic paeans, and all the people poured out lavish offerings of horses, elephants, money, jewels and raiment. [C. 260.] Cymbals, tabors, conches, hautboys, bugles, drums, kettledrums and all kinds of instruments sounded merrily, and all around young maidens sang auspicious songs. The queen and her attendant damsels were overjoyed, as when rain falls upon the thirsty rice-fields. Janak forgot his sorrow and was as happy as a tired swimmer

touching bottom. But the princes were melancholy at the breaking of the bow, as the light of a lamp is dimmed at the dawning of the day.

How can Sītā's joy be described ? It was like the joy of the pied cuckoo when she finds the October raindrop.<sup>1</sup> Laksman gazed on Rāma as the young partridge on the moon.

[D. 263.] Then Śatānanda gave the word, and Sītā drew near to Rāma, and with her went her fair wise maidens singing songs of good omen. Like a young swan she moved, and exceeding lovely were her limbs. [C. 261.] Beautiful was Sītā among her maidens as the Queen of grace among the Graces. In her lotus hand gleamed the wreath of victory, bright with the glory of universal triumph. Modestly she hesitated, but in her soul was great gladness, and no one guessed her deep-hidden love. The princess approached and beheld Rāma's beauty, and stood motionless as a painted picture, till a wise maiden who saw her standing thus prompted her to cast the fair wreath of victory about him. At her word she raised the garland with both hands, but could not cast it about him, for emotion mastered her. Her hands, as they offered the wreath, were like two lotuses on their stems that shrank from the moon. Her companions began to sing when they saw this charming gesture, and Sītā cast the garland on Rāma's breast.

[S. 264.] When they saw the wreath of victory on Raghubar's breast, the gods rained down flowers and the kings all shrank into themselves as lilies shrink at the sight of the sun. [C. 262.] In the city and in the heavens sounded strains of music; the wicked were sad and all the good were glad. Gods, Kinnaras, men, serpents and lordly sages cried, 'Glory ! Glory ! Glory !' and called down blessings. The nymphs of heaven danced and sang and handfuls of flowers fell in unceasing showers; on all sides Brāhmans chanted the Vedas and bards recited songs of praise. Through earth and hell and heaven spread the glorious news that Rāma had broken the bow and won Sītā for his bride. The men and women of the city waved festal lights and lavished gifts beyond their power to give. Sītā and Rāma were a lovely pair, as though Beauty and Love had met in union.

'Touch the Lord's feet, Sītā,' said her maidens, but she was very afraid and would not touch them. [D. 265.] She remembered

<sup>1</sup> The cātakī is said to drink only such raindrops as fall in October, when the sun's longitude corresponds to that of Arcturus (*svāti*).

the fate of Gautama's wife and touched not his feet with her hands;<sup>1</sup> the jewel of the house of Raghu smiled to himself when he saw her marvellous devotion.

[C. 263.] Then looking on Sītā, the princes grew passionately desirous; evil, degenerate fools, they waxed furious; on all sides they arose, the wretches, and donned their armour and gave vent to a torrent of abuse. 'Carry off Sītā,' said some, 'and seize and bind the two princes! He won't get what he wants merely by breaking the bow; who shall marry the princess while we are alive? And if Videha give them any aid, vanquish him in battle as well as the two brothers!' But when the good kings heard their boasts, they said, 'Shame herself is ashamed to hear this company of princes! Your might and dignity and heroism and greatness and honour have all gone the way of the bow! Is this that same valour which you then displayed, or where have you got it from? If that's all the sense you've got, no wonder God has blackened your faces!' [D. 266.] Away with your jealousy, pride and wrath, and gaze your fill on Rāma; know that Lakṣman's fury is a blazing fire and perish not therein like moths! [C. 264.] Vain as the desire of a crow for Garuḍ's portion, or a hare's longing for the lion's share; vain as the craving for inner peace of a man who is angry without a cause, or a wish for all prosperity of an enemy of Śiva; vain as a greedy and covetous man's ambition for renown, or a profligate's yearning for a blameless reputation, or the expectation of final release cherished by Hari's foe—so vain is your covetous passion, O ye kings!'

When Sītā heard the commotion, she was afraid, and her companions took her away to the queen. Rāma returned undisturbed to the *guru*, silently dwelling on Sītā's love. Sītā and the queens were anxiously wondering what God had now in store for them.

When he heard the princes' threats, Lakṣman glanced this way and that, but for awe of Rāma could not speak. [D. 267.] With eyes red with anger and frowning brows he looked upon the kings like a lion's whelp stirred to excitement by the sight of a herd of wild elephants.

[C. 265.] When they saw the tumult, the women of the city were agitated and with one voice abused the kings. At that moment

<sup>1</sup> This obscure allusion affords commentators an opportunity of indulging in a number of fantastic explanations; for example: Sītā was wearing precious stones on her hands, and she was afraid that if they touched Rāma's feet, they might turn into women, like Ahalyā, and share Rāma's love.

came the sun of the lotus line of Bhṛigu,<sup>1</sup> for he had heard the sound of the breaking of Śiva's bow. When they saw him, the kings all shrank back, as a quail lies cowering at the swoop of a hawk. Smeared with ashes that well matched the pallor of his body, with the three Śaiva lines marking his broad brow, and knotted coils of hair upon his head, his moon-bright face somewhat flushed with wrath, with knitted brows and eyes red with anger, he cast a calm but furious glance upon them. His shoulders were strong as a bull's, his chest was broad and his arms were long; a fair sacred thread he wore, with a string of beads and a deerskin; on his loins a hermit's dress and two quivers at his side, a bow and arrows in his hand and an axe on his strong shoulder. [D. 268.] His guise was the guise of ascetic calm, but his actions were fierce; his form was beyond description; it was as though the Heroic had approached the kings in the shape of an anchorite.

[C. 266.] At the sight of Bhṛigupati's dreadful guise the kings all rose in consternation, and each declaring his name and the name of his father, prostrated themselves before him. Even he on whom Paraśurāma cast a natural, friendly glance thought his time had come. Then Janak came and bowed his head before him and sent for Sītā to do obeisance. He blessed her, and her wise companions were pleased and brought her back again to their own circle. Next, Viśvāmitra came to greet him and brought the two brothers to touch his lotus feet. 'These are Rāma and Laksman, sons of Daśarath,' he said. Paraśurāma looked on the well-matched pair and gave them his blessing; he gazed astounded on Rāma, whose peerless beauty would humble Love himself.

[D. 269.] Then, turning to Videha, he said, 'Tell me, why this huge crowd?' Well he knew, but he asked as though he knew not, and his whole body was one mass of fury.

[C. 267.] Janak told him why all the kings had come together. He listened to his story, then turned and looked in another direction, and spied the pieces of the bow lying on the ground. In a furious passion he cried aloud, 'Tell me, Janak, you fool, who has broken the bow? Point him out immediately, you dotard, or here and now I'll overthrow your realm as far as your sovereignty extends!'

The king was too terrified to make reply, and the wicked princes were inwardly delighted. Gods, sages, serpents and the men and women of the city were all upset and panic-stricken. Sītā's mother

<sup>1</sup> Paraśurāma.

was lamenting, 'Now God has upset all our well-laid plans!' And when Sitā heard of Bhṛigupati's temper, half a minute seemed to her to pass like an aeon.

[D. 270.] When the Lord Raghubir saw that all the people were afraid and perceived that Jānaki was terrified, he said, with neither joy nor sorrow in his heart, [C. 268.] 'Lord, it must be one of your servants who has broken Śambhu's bow; what is your bidding? Pray tell me.' To this the passionate sage replied in a fury, 'A servant is one who serves, but one who acts like an enemy must be fought. Hear me, Rāma! Whoever broke the bow of Śiva is as much my enemy as Sahasrabāhu! Let him come forth alone from amidst the assembly, or else all the kings will be destroyed!'

When he heard the sage's threat, Lakṣman smiled and spoke contemptuously to the Bearer of the Axe: 'Many a little bow have I broken when a boy, but you, sir, were never as angry as this. Why are you so fond of this bow?'

To this replied the Banner of the house of Bhṛigu in a rage, [D. 271.] 'Ha! princeling! You care not what you say, for Death has marked you for his own! Do you compare to a little bow the world-renowned bow of Tripurāri?'

[C. 269.] Said Lakṣman with a laugh, 'Listen, divine sage! In my opinion all bows are alike. What does the breaking of a rotten old bow matter one way or the other? Rāma mistook it for a new one; no sooner did he touch it than it broke. It wasn't Raghupati's fault; then, sage, why are you so unreasonably angry?'

With a glance at his axe the sage replied, 'You fool, have you never heard of my temper? You're a mere child, I say, and that's why I do not slay you. Do you imagine that I'm merely an ordinary anchorite? From my youth I have been a continent ascetic, and very passionate, too, and renowned throughout the world as the Kṣatriyas' foe! By the strength of my arm I have stripped earth of kings, and many a time have made it a gift to Brāhmans. See here my axe, O prince, that shore off the arms of the Thousand-armed! [D. 272.] Plunge not your parents into grief, O son of a king! My axe is very cruel; it slays infants in the womb!'

[C. 270.] Lakṣman smiled as he gently replied, 'Aha, lord of sages, very confident are you in your prowess! You keep on showing me your axe; you want to blow away a mountain with a puff! But I'm not a weak little gourd that fades away at the sight of a finger. When I saw your axe and bow and arrows,

perhaps I spoke a little arrogantly; but now that I realize that you are of the Bhṛigu line and mark your sacred thread, I will bear good-temperedly anything you say. In our family there is no display of valour against gods or Brāhmans or votaries or cows; for to slay them is a sin and to suffer defeat at their hands is dishonour. So though you strike me, I must fall at your feet. Your every word is like ten million thunderbolts; needless for you to carry bow and arrows and axe! [D. 273.] If when I saw your weapons I may have said aught improper, pardon me, O great and patient sage!

When he heard this, the jewel of the Bhṛigu race cried aloud in furious tones, [C. 271.] 'Hear me, Viśvāmitra! This child is mad and perverse, doomed to death himself and the ruin of his house, a stain on the full moon of the Solar race, utterly uncontrolled, demented and reckless! Another moment and he shall be a morsel in the jaws of death, and I loudly assert that I shall not be to blame! Check him, if you would save him, by the recital of my prowess, my might and my fury!'

'O sage,' said Laksman, 'who else can tell of your fair renown while you still live to tell it? With your own lips have you told me of your own exploits time and again in many ways, and if you are not satisfied, tell them all over again. Endure not pain unendurable by checking your wrath. You are resolute and dauntless and sworn to valour, and you can win no glory by pouring out abuse. [D. 274.] Heroes perform deeds of valour on the field but do not themselves make them known. It is cowards who brag of their prowess when they find themselves confronted with a foe. [C. 272.] You're repeatedly crying and calling on death to deal with me!'

When he heard Laksman's impudent speech, he took his fearful axe in hand and made it ready. 'Now let no man blame me,' he cried; 'this impertinent child merits death! Long have I spared him, seeing he is but a child, but now of a truth he is going to die!'

'Nay, pardon his offence,' said Viśvāmitra; 'the good take no account of a child's faults or virtues.'

'My axe is sharp,' he replied, 'and I am pitiless and passionate; and here before me this guilty child insults my *guru* and dares to answer me! Yet will I let him go and forbear to slay him, simply, Viśvāmitra, for the love I bear you; else would I have slain him with my dread axe and easily have paid my *guru* his due.'

[D. 275.] Viśvāmitra laughed to himself and said, 'Everything looks green to the sage.<sup>1</sup> But here we have a sword of steel, not a stick of sugar-cane.<sup>2</sup> The sage is senseless and does not yet understand.'

[C. 273.] 'Sage,' said Laksman, 'who does not know your honourable character? The whole world recognizes it. You have well discharged your obligations to your father and mother;<sup>3</sup> remains only the debt you owe to your *guru*, and now you're worrying about that. Now you've, as it were, made me responsible for it, and after all this time the interest has mounted up; so send for your business man and I'll open my purse and pay up straight-away.'

At these insolent words Paraśurāma made ready his axe, and all the company cried out, 'Alas! Alas!' 'Noble Bhṛigu,' said Laksman, 'you're brandishing your axe at me, are you? Still, I'll spare you, you enemy of kings, because you're a Brāhmaṇa. You've never yet had to face a really stalwart warrior; you're a brave carpet-knight, you Brāhmaṇa divinity!' Everybody cried out, 'Insolence!' and Raghupati checked Laksman with a sign.

[D. 276.] When he saw that Laksman's answer had added fuel to the fire of the noble Bhṛigu's wrath, the sun of the house of Raghu spoke words like water to quench it. [C. 274.] 'Lord, have mercy on the child,' he said; 'be not angry with an innocent unweaned babe! Had he at all understood my lord's great power, would the senseless boy have claimed equality with you? Even if a boy is a little naughty, his *guru* and father and mother are delighted. Remember he is only a child and your servant and be kind to him; for you are a wise and patient sage and look impartially on all.'

At Rāma's words the sage grew somewhat cooler; but then Laksman said something and smiled again, and seeing him smile, he was filled with wrath from head to foot and cried, 'Rāma, your brother is an utter scoundrel! His complexion is fair but his heart is black; he drinks poison at the breast, not milk! He's crooked through and through; he takes not after you, nor does the base villain see in me the likeness of Death!'

[D. 277.] 'Hearken, sage,' said Laksman with a smile; 'wrath is the root of sin; it drives men on to do unworthy deeds and fight

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to a popular saying. Paraśurāma thinks all Kṣatriyas are his enemies. *Hari-ari* may also be taken as 'enemy of Hari'.

<sup>2</sup> *ayamaya khāṇḍra na ukhamaya: khāṇḍrā*, sword; *khāṇḍra*, sugar-stick.

<sup>3</sup> See App., s.v. Paraśurāma.

against the world. [C. 275.] I am your servant, king of sages; now cease from anger and show mercy. Wrath will not mend the broken bow. Pray take a rest—your feet must be aching. If you are so fond of the bow, do something about it; send for some cunning craftsman and have it mended.'

Janak was frightened when Laksman said this. 'Be quiet!' he cried. 'You shouldn't be so impudent!' The men and women of the city trembled and shook. 'The young prince,' they thought, 'is outrageously impertinent!' As Bhṛigupati went on listening to his fearless speech, he was consumed with rage and his strength failed him. He besought Rāma to help him. 'I'm sparing him,' he said, 'because he's your little brother. Though fair to see, his heart is evil, like a golden jar full of poison!'

[D. 278.] At this Laksman laughed again, but Rāma frowned at him so that he was abashed and returned to the *guru* with no more impudent raillery. [C. 276.] Then folding his hands, Rāma humbly addressed the sage in gentle pacifying tones: 'Hear me, lord; you are by nature wise; turn a deaf ear to the words of a child. Children are like wasps; good men never blame them. Then again, it is not he who has done any wrong. It is I, lord, who have offended against you. Mercy or wrath, death or bonds, holy sir, visit on me, for I am your servant. Tell me quickly, O chief of sages, how your wrath may be assuaged, that I may so assuage it.'

'Rāma,' replied the sage, 'you ask how my wrath can be assuaged? Why, even now your young brother is casting impudent glances at me! Yet I've not cut his head off with my axe—then what have I done in anger? [D. 279.] At the rumour of the fierce doings of my axe queens give untimely birth; and yet here is my axe, and I see this princeling, my enemy, still alive! [C. 277.] If my hand moves not, is my heart inflamed with passion? This axe of mine that has slain kings is blunted! God thwarts me and my nature has suffered change; for when has there ever been mercy in my heart? Pity today is causing me to suffer intolerable pain!'

Hearing this, the son of Sumitrā laughed and bowed his head. 'The wind of your mercy,' he said, 'matches your form; your words are like flowers that fall from the trees! If your body, O sage, is consumed by pity, God help it when you're angry!'

'See, Janak,' said Paraśurāma, 'this silly boy is bent on making his home in the halls of death! Take him right away out of my

sight; this prince is small to look at, but he's impudent enough!' Lakṣman laughed and said to himself, 'Shut your eyes and there'll be no one to be seen!'

[D. 280.] Then Paraśurāma spoke to Rāma with a heart full of fury: 'You break Śambhu's bow, you dolt, and then venture to lecture me?' [C. 278.] It's you who have egged your brother on to be so rude; your meekness and folding of hands are all hypocrisy. Give me satisfaction in battle, or give up the right to be called Rāma! Have done with your hypocrisy, you enemy of Śiva, and fight me, or I'll slay you and your brother too!'

So raved Bhṛigupati and raised his axe on high; but Rāma smiled to himself and bowed his head. 'Lakṣman is to blame,' he thought, 'and you're angry with me. It's sometimes a great mistake to be straight, for everybody courts the crooked. Rāhu swallows not the crescent moon.' Then said Rāma, 'Enough of your anger, lord of sages. Your axe is in your hand and here before you is my head. Do what you will, my master, to assuage your wrath, believing me to be your servant. [D. 281.] How can a servant fight with his master? Cease from your fury, noble Brāhmaṇ. It was when he saw your accoutrements that the boy spoke rudely; it was not his fault. [C. 279.] When he saw you armed with axe and bow and arrows, the boy took you for a warrior and grew angry; he knew your name, but did not recognize you, and answered you as a man of his race would answer. Had you come as an anchorite, holy sir, the child would have placed the dust of your feet on his head. Pardon the error of one who did not know you; a Brāhmaṇ's heart should be a fount of mercy. How, lord, can you and I be equal? We are as far apart as head and feet. My poor name is simply Rāma, but your great name is Rāma of the Axe. My bow, divine lord, has but one string, while yours has all the great and holy nine.<sup>1</sup> I am altogether inferior to you; O Brāhmaṇ, pardon my offences!'

[D. 282.] Again and again did Rāma address Rāma, calling him 'Sage' and 'noble Brāhmaṇ'. Then Bhṛigupati said with a furious laugh, 'You're just as crooked as your brother! [C. 280.] Do you take me for a mere ordinary Brāhmaṇ? I'll tell you what sort of a Brāhmaṇ I am! Know then that my bow is my sacrificial ladle, my arrow the burnt-offering and my wrath the burning

<sup>1</sup> The *śikā* gives the following list: *sama*, *dama*, *tapa*, *sauca*, *kṣamā*, *saralatā*, *jñāna*, *vijñāna*, *āstikatā*. Other commentators give other lists.

fire; my glorious army of horses and chariots and elephants and footmen is my fuel, and great kings whom I have slain for sacrifice with this axe have been the beasts I have offered; myriads such martial sacrifices have I performed with appropriate cries of prayer! You know not my mighty power, but think me a mere Brāhmaṇ and insult me. You are swollen with pride because you have broken the bow; you are as self-confident as if you stand there conqueror of the world !'

'Sage,' said Rāma, 'think before you speak. Your wrath is great, but my fault is trifling. The old bow broke at a touch; why should I be proud of that? [D. 283.] If I treat you with disrespect by calling you Brāhmaṇ, then hear the truth, Bhṛigu-nāth. What warrior is there in the world for fear of whom I would bow my head? [C. 281.] If anyone, be he god, demon, king or soldier, as strong as I or stronger, challenge me to combat, I would fight him with pleasure, be he Death himself! For one who is born a Kṣatriya and fears to fight is a cowardly wretch and brings disgrace upon his family. I state the simple truth and make no boast of my lineage; no member of the race of Raghu fears to meet Death himself in combat. Yet such is the dignity of Brāhmaṇ descent that he fears you who fears none other.'

When he heard Raghupati's gentle and profound words, the eyes of Paraśurāma's mind were opened and he said, 'O Rāma, take this bow of Viṣṇu and draw it, that I may no longer doubt.' He was handing him the bow when it moved to him of its own accord, and Paraśurāma was dumbfounded.

[D. 284.] He recognized the power of Rāma and felt a thrill of rapture; his heart could not contain his love as he spoke with folded hands:

[C. 282.] 'Glory to the sun of the lotus race of Raghu, to the fire that burns up the dense forest of the demon line! Glory to the friend of gods, Brāhmaṇs and cows! Glory to him who dispels all pride and folly and wrath and error! Glory to the ocean of meekness, loving-kindness, mercy and all perfections, to the master of eloquence who brings joy to his servants, perfect in beauty, with the graceful form of a myriad Kāmadevas! How can I praise theea with a single tongue? Glory to the swan that glides on the holy lake of Mahādeva's soul! In my ignorance I have said much that was improper; pardon me, ye two brothers, shrines of pardon!' Crying, 'Glory, glory, glory to the Banner of the house of Raghu!' Bhṛigupati retired to the forest to do penance.

Guilty conscience daunted the wicked kings and they slunk away and fled in all directions like cowards. [D. 285.] The gods sounded their drums and rained down flowers upon the Lord; the men and women of the city all rejoiced, relieved of the pain their ignorance had caused.

[C. 283.] Loud sounded the music and all made beauteous festal preparations. Bands of fair women, bright of eye and sweet-voiced as the cuckoo, joined in song. No tongue can tell the joy of Janak, as though one born a beggar had lit on a treasure. Gone was Sītā's fear; she was as happy as a young partridge at the rising of the moon. Janak did obeisance to Viśvāmitra and said, 'By my lord's favour Rāma has broken the bow. The two brothers have accomplished my purpose; now, holy master, tell me what I should do.'

'Hearken, wise monarch,' said the sage; 'the wedding depended on the bow; as soon as the bow broke, the marriage took effect, as gods and men and serpents know full well. [D. 286.] Still, go and consult the Brāhmans, the elders of your house and the *guru*, and perform, as is the custom in your family, whatever rites the Veda prescribes. [C. 284.] Go, send messengers to the city of Avadh to invite king Daśarath and escort him hither.'

Gladly the king replied, 'Very well, gracious lord,' and summoned and dispatched the messengers forthwith. Next, he called together all the leading men, and they all came and bowed respectfully. 'Decorate', said the king, 'the markets and the streets, the houses and the temples and every part of the city.' Delighted they returned each to his own house. Then the king summoned his servants and said, 'Construct and set up splendid pavilions.' Gladly and obediently they went and sent for a number of craftsmen who were clever and skilled in the construction of pavilions; these, with a prayer to Brahmā, began their work and made pillars of gold like plantain trees.

[D. 287.] Their leaves and fruit were of emeralds and their flowers of rubies. The Creator was dumbfounded at the sight of their cunning workmanship. [C. 285.] The bamboo rods they fashioned all of emerald, straight and knotted, so that no one could tell if they were real or not; and betel-plants they worked in gold with their leaves so skilfully made that they could not be known for false. Then they worked on the leaves and made ropes, with strings of glittering pearls at intervals; lotuses, too, they fashioned, cutting and engraving and inlaying rubies and emeralds

and diamonds and turquoises. They made bees and birds of many hues that hummed or cooed as the wind blew through them. They carved images of the gods upon the pillars, all standing there with auspicious objects in their hands. All manner of squares they traced and filled with gleaming elephant-pears. [D. 288.] Sapphires they graved to make wondrous beautiful mango leaves, and on the trees shone golden blossoms and emerald clusters bound with silken thread. [C. 286.] They wove most lovely festoons, as though Love himself had fashioned nooses. Many festal vessels they made, flags and banners and screens and charming whisks; a number of beautiful lamps, too, studded with jewels. The marvel of that pavilion cannot be described; and the pavilion prepared for the bride, the princess of Videha, what poet has skill enough to attempt its description? The canopy erected for Rāma the bridegroom, ocean of beauty and virtue, shone radiant throughout the three spheres. In every house in the city could be seen the same magnificence as marked the palace of Janak. Whoever at that time saw Tirahuta would think nothing of the fourteen worlds.<sup>1</sup> The king of heaven himself was entranced at the sight of the rich splendour of the humblest house. [D. 289.] Śāradā and Śeṣa themselves shrink from describing the magnificence of that city wherein Lakṣmī dwelt, disguised in the fair form of a mortal woman.

[C. 287.] Meanwhile the messengers arrived at Rāma's holy capital, and right glad were they to see the glorious city. They sent in word to the king's palace, and when king Daśarath heard of their arrival, he summoned them to his presence. They did obeisance and handed him the letter; gladly the king himself rose and received it. His eyes filled with tears as he read it; he trembled with emotion and his heart was full of joy. In his heart were Rāma and Laksman, and in his hand the welcome letter; he could not utter a single word. Then he composed himself and read the letter aloud and the whole court rejoiced to hear the sure tidings. Bharat was playing when he heard the news, and came with his friends and his brother and asked with affectionate modesty, 'Where has the letter come from, father? [D. 290.] Is all well with my two beloved brothers? Tell me, what country are they in?'

<sup>1</sup> The fourteen worlds are: above the earth; bhūrloka, bhūvarloka, svarloka, maharloka, janarloka, tapoloka and satyaloka; below the earth; atala, sutala, bitala, gabbastimat, rasatala, mahatala and pātala.

Hearing his affectionate words, the king read out the letter again; [C. 288.] and when they heard the letter, the two brothers felt a thrill of joy and could scarce contain their feelings of affection. The whole court was enraptured at the sight of Bharat's pure devotion. Then the king seated the messengers by his side and addressed them in sweet and winning words: 'Tell me, friends, are the two children well? Have you had a good look at them with your own eyes? One is dark and one is fair, and they both carry bow and quiver; they are young and are with Viśvāmitra the sage. If you know them, tell me how they are.' Overpowered by affection, the king repeatedly put his questions: 'Ever since the sage took them away with him I have had no sure tidings of them until today. Tell me, how did Videha recognize them?'

The messengers smiled when they heard his fond inquiries and replied, [D. 291.] 'Hearken, O greatest of monarchs; none is so blest as yourself who have Rāma and Lakṣman for your sons, two jewels of the universe. [C. 289.] There is no need to ask your sons who they are. Lion-like heroes are they, illuminating the three spheres, before whose glory and splendour the moon waxes dim and the sun cold. You ask us, sire, how we recognized them? Does one take a lamp in hand to look at the sun? Many were the kings who assembled at Sītā's nuptial choice, and each more valiant than the next; yet not one could move Śambhu's bow; all these mighty heroes were worsted. Śambhu's bow made nought of the strength of them all, though they boasted of their prowess throughout the three spheres. Sarāsura could lift Mount Meru, but even he had to admit defeat, paced round it and went off, while he who raised Śiva's mountain for fun<sup>1</sup> found himself worsted in that assembly. [D. 292.] Hearken, great king; there it was that Rāma, jewel of the Raghu line, broke the bow as easily as an elephant snaps a lotus stem!'

[C. 290.] 'When Bhṛigunāyak heard it, he came in a rage and uttered all sorts of furious threats; but when he beheld Rāma's might, he gave him his own bow and humbly retired to the forest. As Rāma, O king, is unmatched in strength, so also is Lakṣman the glorious, at the sight of whom the princes trembled as an elephant at the sight of a lion-cub. No one, sire, who has seen your two sons can look with esteem on any other.'

All were delighted at the eloquence of the messengers, so affectionate and dignified and heroic; the king and all his courtiers

<sup>1</sup> Rāvan.

were deeply affected, and would have offered presents to the messengers, but they closed their ears, crying, 'No, no!', and all were pleased when they marked their upright conduct.

[D. 293.] Then the king arose and went and gave the letter to Vasiṣṭha, and courteously sending for the messengers, related the whole story to the *guru*. [C. 291.] The *guru* was very pleased when he heard it and said, 'The world is full of happiness for a man whose deeds deserve it; just as rivers flow into the sea, though the sea has no desire for them, so do happiness and prosperity come spontaneously to a man of high integrity; and just as you do dutiful service to your *guru* and to Brāhmans, cows and gods, so also is the lady Kausalyā devout. No one in the world ever was or is or will be as virtuous as you. Whose merit, O king, can be greater than yours, who have a son like Rāma and whose four noble boys are such modest heroes, strict in the observance of their duties, oceans of all perfection? Blessed are you at all times. So let the music sound and prepare the marriage procession, [D. 294.] and set out right soon!'

To the *guru*'s words the king replied, 'So be it, lord!' and bowed his head; then assigned apartments to the messengers and returned to the palace.

[C. 292.] The king sent for the ladies of the court and read aloud Janak's letter. They were all filled with joy at the news, and the king told them all the other events that had taken place. The queens were as overwhelmed with affectionate delight as a peahen when she hears the rumble of thunder-clouds. The *guru*'s wives joyfully invoked blessings, and the mothers were in ecstasies. One after another they took that most beloved letter and clasped it to their bosoms to cool the fire of love. Over and over again the great king recounted the far-famed exploits of Rāma and Lakṣman, saying, 'It is all by favour of the sage!' He then left the chamber, and the queens summoned the Brāhmans and joyfully gave them presents. The noble Brāhmans blessed them and departed.

[D. 295.] Next, they called together the beggars and showered on them a myriad gifts. 'Long live the four sons of the emperor Daśarath!' [C. 293.] they cried, as they went off dressed in all kinds of garments. Musicians struck up loud and jubilant music, and when all the people heard the news, in every house was festive acclamation. The fourteen worlds were filled with joyous excitement; Raghubīr was going to be married to Janak's

daughter ! The people were wild with joy when they heard the glad tidings and began to decorate the streets and houses and lanes. Though Avadh was always beautiful, being Rāma's pure, auspicious city, yet for the love the people bore him it was adorned with charming festal decorations. The market was a marvel with its flags and banners and screens and lovely whisks. There were golden vessels, too, and triumphal arches with jewelled fringes; and with turmeric and panic-grass and curds and rice and garlands [D. 296.] each citizen adorned his house and made it auspicious. They sprinkled the roads with blended perfumes<sup>1</sup> and traced and filled in charming squares.

[C. 294.] Everywhere bands of matrons came together, bright as lightning, with faces fair as the moon and the eyes of young fawns, adorned in the sixteen modes, humbling with their grace the pride of Rati, and sang in sweetest tones festive odes so beautiful that cuckoos when they heard them were silent and ashamed.

And how can the king's palace be described, where a pavilion was erected to dazzle the world ? All sorts of lovely objects of good omen were there, and many an instrument of music was to be heard. Here were bards, glorifying the race in song, and here were Brāhmans chanting Vedic texts. Beautiful women sang auspicious lays, with the names of Rāma and Sītā ever on their lips. Great was the rejoicing, and it seemed to overflow in all directions, for the palace was too small to hold it within bounds. [D. 297.] What poet is able to describe the splendour of Daśarath's palace, wherein Rāma, chiefest of all the gods, took human form ?

[C. 295.] Then the king sent for Bharat and said, 'Go, prepare horses and elephants and chariots and speedily set forth with Raghubir's wedding guests.' The king's command filled the two brothers with joyous excitement. Bharat summoned all the masters of the horse and gave them his orders; joyfully they arose and made all haste. They set fitting saddles on the horses; noble steeds of varied hue stood ready, all handsome and very light-footed, stepping on the ground as though on red-hot iron. The various breeds could not be told; they ran faster than the wind. The dashing princes who rode them were of an age with Bharat, all handsome and bedecked with jewels, carrying bow and arrows

<sup>1</sup> *caturasama*: a mixture of *candana* (sandal), *kesara* (saffron), *kasturi* (musk), and *kapūra* (camphor).

in their hands, with heavy quivers hanging by their sides. [D. 298.] Slender, gay and dashing were they all, heroes young and dexterous, each rider attended by two footmen, skilled in the swordsman's art.

[C. 296.] With high resolve the expert warriors came forth and stood outside the city. They cleverly put their horses through all their paces and rejoiced to hear the sound of drum and tabor. The charioteers decked their chariots, bringing flags and banners, gems and ornaments to adorn them; with lovely whisks and little tinkling bells, in splendour they outshone the chariot of the sun. Countless were the black-eared horses which the charioteers harnessed to those chariots, all fair and beauitously bedecked, a sight to entrance a sage. They went on water like dry land; their hooves sank not, so swift their pace.

When the charioteers had prepared armour and weapons and all equipment, they summoned the warriors to mount the cars.

[D. 299.] Each mounted his chariot, and the marriage procession began to form outside the city. All met with fair omens, each according to the purpose of his journey. [C. 297.] Splendid howdahs were set on the noble elephants, embellished beyond all telling. Proudly the elephants moved, and their bells sounded like thunder from the clouds in the pleasant month of Śrāvana. Many other kinds of carriage were there, litters and palanquins of fair design and coaches wherein were riding companies of noble Brāhmans, as though all the sacred hymns had assumed the forms of men. Rhapsodists, bards, minstrels and panegyrists travelled in carriages that matched their estate; and every sort of mule and camel and bullock went laden with countless kinds of goods. There, too, went porters, yoked with a myriad shoulder-slings, and who can describe the various goods they carried? All the great company of servants went forth, each with his own prepared accoutrements.

[D. 300.] The hearts of all were filled with gladness; they trembled with rapture. 'When', they thought, 'shall we satisfy our eyes with the sight of the two heroes, Rāma and Laksman?'

[C. 298.] The elephants trumpeted, and on every side were heard the deep clanging of their bells, the rumble of the chariots and the neighing of the horses. The clash of musical instruments was louder than thunder; no one could hear his own voice or another's. So dense was the crowd at the king's gate that did one throw a stone it would be trodden into dust. Women mounted to the upper rooms and watched the spectacle, with festal lamps

and platters in their hands. Happier than tongue can tell, they sang all manner of charming songs.

Then Sumantra made ready two chariots and harnessed to them horses far swifter than the horses of the sun. These two beautiful chariots he brought to the king; not even Sarasvati could describe them. One was prepared for the royal company, and the other most magnificently equipped. [D. 301.] On that splendid chariot the monarch gladly set Vasiṣṭha, and himself mounted his car, with his thoughts fixed on Hara and his *guru* and Gaurī and Gaṇeśa.

[C. 299.] The king and Vasiṣṭha together looked like Purandara with the *guru* of the gods.<sup>1</sup> Then the monarch, lord of the earth, after performing all rites that the custom of his family and the Veda prescribed, inspected all the preparations, and thinking on Rāma, took permission from the *guru* and set forth to the sound of the conch. The gods rejoiced when they saw the procession, and rained down flowers to bless the journey with happy omens.

Loud was the uproar as horses neighed and elephants trumpeted and music sounded in heaven and in the procession; women, celestial and mortal together, sang jubilant strains and hautboys played melodious tunes. The clang of bells, large and small, was indescribable. Servants on foot leapt high into the air and performed acrobatic feats.<sup>2</sup> Clowns, skilled in buffoonery and masters of merry songs, practised their jesting. [D. 302.] Noble princes made their horses prance to the tabor's beat, and expert dancers were astonished to see that they never made one pace out of time.

[C. 300.] But no one can describe the procession. Fair omens of good fortune were seen; on the left a blue jay was picking up grain, as if to predict all that was auspicious; on the right a crow was clearly seen in a fertile field, and everybody spied a mongoose; breezes blew, cool, mild and fragrant, from the right quarter, and a noble matron met them, carrying pitcher and child. A fox kept constantly appearing, and there was a cow before them, suckling its calf. A herd of deer came round to the right, as if to foretell all that was most fortunate. A white-headed kite promised great good luck, and to the left a *syāmā*,<sup>3</sup> perched on a fair tree; and in

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Indra with Vṛihaspati.

<sup>2</sup> *sarava karahīn pāika phaharāhīn*: the *tikā* explains: *pāidal* calmeudie *sevaka-gaṇa*, *athavā pattebāz*, *kusrat ke khel karrahe hain aur ākāsa men ānce ucchalte hue jārahe hain*.

<sup>3</sup> *syāmā*: *Kittacinela malabarica*, a small singing bird with black plumage.

front of them appeared curds and fish, and two learned Brāhmans with books in their hands.

[D. 303.] All good omens, bearing with them blessing and fortune and accomplishing every desire, occurred at one and the same time, as though to prove their truth; [C. 301.] and surely should he meet with all fair omens whose glorious sons are the Absolute made personal! When they heard of a marriage where such as Rāma was the bridegroom and Sītā the bride, and pure-souled Daśarath and Janak the parents, all the omens leapt to their feet and cried, 'Now at last the Creator has brought our promise to fulfilment!'

Thus the procession set forth. Horses neighed and elephants trumpeted and there was a beating of drums. When he knew that the Banner of the Solar race was approaching, Janak bridged the rivers; at every stage he had splendid rest-houses built, furnished like the mansions of heaven; and finding food and pleasant couches and splendid raiment, all as each most desired, the travellers ever enjoyed the sight of some new wished-for luxury and all forgot their own homes.

[D. 304.] Perceiving that the glorious procession was approaching, and hearing the clamour of instrumental music, an escort advanced to welcome them with elephants, chariots, footmen and horses.

[C. 302.] Brimming golden vases, trays and platters and beautiful vessels of every kind, filled with sweetmeats delicious as nectar and of indescribable variety, luscious fruit and other good things, did the king gladly send as gifts of welcome; ornaments and raiment and all manner of precious gems, birds and beasts, horses and elephants and every kind of carriage and all sorts of fragrant and auspicious objects the monarch sent; porters came, too, with baskets laden with curds and rice and countless offerings. When the escort saw the procession, their hearts were filled with happiness and they felt a thrill of joyous excitement; and when they saw the escort with all that they had brought, the guests sounded their drums in rapture.

[D. 305.] Some on both sides enthusiastically galloped forward to meet one another, and met like two seas of bliss that had burst their bounds.

[C. 303.] Celestial nymphs rained down flowers and sang and the gods beat their drums for joy. The escort set all their presents before the king and with great affection humbly asked him to accept them. The king lovingly received all their offerings and

gave alms to the beggars. Then with reverence and respect and honour the escort conducted him to the guest-chambers. Carpets of gorgeous cloth were spread for his feet, at the sight of which Kuvera would cease to boast his wealth. Very beautiful were the guest-chambers allotted them, wherein all found everything they needed.

When Sītā knew that the procession had reached the city, she manifested to some extent her own great power. By means of inner contemplation she summoned all the supernatural spirits<sup>1</sup> and sent them to attend the king. [D. 306.] At Sītā's bidding all the spirits repaired to the guest-chamber with every rich celestial luxury to bring the king delight. [C. 304.] Each wedding guest found his own chamber furnished with every kind of heavenly delight; but no one guessed at all the secret source of power, but all were loud in praise of Janak. Yet Raghunāyak knew it for Sītā's power and rejoiced when he realized her loving care.

The two brothers could not contain their joy when they heard of their father's arrival. They could say nothing to their *guru* for very modesty, but inwardly they longed to see their father. Viśvāmitra was well content to mark their great diffidence; joyfully he clasped the two brothers to his heart with a thrill of emotion and tears in his eyes. Then they went to Daśarath's guest-chamber, like a pool that hastens to satisfy a thirsty traveller's longing.

[D. 307.] When the king saw the sage approaching with his sons, he rose in joy and advanced, as one who feels bottom in a sea of bliss. [C. 305.] The monarch prostrated himself before the sage and repeatedly placed the dust of his feet upon his head. Viśvāmitra clasped the king to his bosom, gave him his blessing and asked him how he fared. Then seeing the two brothers falling prostrate before him, the king could not contain his joy; he clasped his sons to his heart and eased the intolerable anguish he had borne, like a dead man quickened to new life. Next, they bowed their heads before Vasiṣṭha's feet, and the high sage embraced them in an ecstasy of love. The two brothers did homage to the company of Brāhmans and received all the blessings their souls desired. Bharat and his younger brother made their obeisance and Rāma raised them to their feet and clasped them to his breast. Laksman was overjoyed to see his two brothers and greeted them with the

<sup>1</sup> See note on B.C. 22. The eight miraculous powers are here personified as subject to Sītā's bidding.

utmost affection. [D. 308.] Then the most gracious and modest Lord greeted with appropriate honour all the citizens and the members of his household and family, the beggars, the ministers and his friends.

[C. 306.] When the wedding guests beheld Rāma, their yearning was satisfied and no one can describe the affection they displayed. The four boys standing by the king looked like the four rewards incarnate. The men and women of the city were in transports at the sight of Daśarath with his sons; the gods showered down blossoms and beat their drums, and the Apsarās sang and danced. Those who had come to escort them—Śatānanda, Brāhmans and ministers, panegyrists, rhapsodists, scholars and bards—did reverence to the king and the wedding guests, and with their leave returned. The procession had arrived before the day fixed for the wedding, and so the city was all the more delighted; all the people enjoyed the pleasures of Paradise and prayed God the days and nights might be prolonged.

[D. 309.] Everywhere the citizens—men and women assembled together—were saying, 'Rāma and Sītā are perfect beauty and the two kings perfect piety. [C. 307.] The princess of Videha is the express image of Janak's merit, and Daśarath's merit has taken mortal form as Rāma. None has worshipped Śiva so devoutly as these; none other has met with so rich a reward. There has been none like them in the world, nor is, nor ever will be. All we, too, have won the highest merit in that we have been born into the world as citizens of Janak's city, and have beheld the beauty of Jānakī and Rāma! Who so marvellously rewarded for our merit as we? And now we shall see Raghubir's wedding and feast our eyes upon the goodly sight!'

Sweet-voiced maidens said to one another, 'Bright-eyed sister, the issue of this union will be most happy. God has blessed us with great good fortune, for these two brothers will dwell in our eyes as guests. [D. 310.] Moved by affection, Janak will often and often send for Sītā, and the two brothers, beauteous as a myriad Loves, will come to fetch her home, [C. 308.] and we shall show them every hospitality. Who, sister, would not love such a father-in-law? And at those times all the people of the city will see Rāma and Laksman and be delighted. Sister, there are two other princes with the king, very like this pair, Rāma and Laksman; one is dark, the other fair, and both are beautiful in every limb; so say all who have seen them.'

Said one, 'I saw them today; they are as charming as if the Creator had fashioned them with his own hands. Bharat is just like Rāma; no man or woman can easily distinguish one from the other; and Lakṣman and Śatrughna look exactly alike, both of peerless beauty from head to foot. They charm the soul, but no tongue can describe them; nowhere in the three worlds have they a match.'

[Ch. 25.] 'Nowhere have they a match, say poets and scholars. Only these are like themselves, perfect in strength and modesty, learning, loving-kindness and beauty!' The women of the city with humble entreaty all made their petition to God: 'May all four brothers find brides in this city and we sing their marriage songs!'

[S. 311.] With tears in their eyes and trembling with emotion, the women were saying to one another, 'Sister, the two kings have won such boundless merit that Purāri will bring it all to good effect.' [C. 309.] Thus they all expressed their desire, and joy filled their hearts to overflowing. The kings who had come to witness Sītā's betrothal were all delighted when they saw the brothers, and returned, each to his own home, with the praise of Rāma's high and spotless renown on their lips.

Some days passed in this way, and the citizens and the guests were all very happy. The propitious day of the wedding arrived; it was the pleasant winter month of Agahana.<sup>1</sup> God himself had carefully determined the date—a time when the aspect of the planets, the conjunction of the stars, the day of the month and the week were all auspicious. This calculation he had sent by Nārada, and Janak's astrologers had made the very same calculation, so that when all the people heard of this event, they cried, 'Why, our astrologers and the Creator are one!'

[D. 312.] It was the pure and most refreshing hour of sunset; the Brāhmans found the omens fair and sent word to Janak.

[C. 310.] The king said to the household priest, 'Now why should we delay?' Then Śatānanda summoned the ministers, who prepared and brought all that was auspicious. Loud sounded the conches and drums and other instruments of music, and sacred vessels and objects of good omen were made ready. Comely maidens sang songs and holy Brāhmans muttered Vedic texts.

Thus they set out courteously to fetch the guests and came to their apartments; and when they saw the magnificence of Kosala's

<sup>1</sup> *Agahana*: November-December.

king, they thought but little of the king of heaven. 'The hour has come,' they said; 'be pleased to set forth.' At this the drums were beaten, and the king, having asked permission of the *guru*, performed the family rites and set out with his company of sages and holy saints.

[D. 313.] When Brahmā and all the gods beheld the good success and sovereign might of the king of Avadh, they began to praise him with a thousand tongues and held their own lives to be but vain. [C. 311.] Perceiving that the auspicious hour had come, the gods rained down flowers and sounded their drums. Śiva and Brahmā and all the deities mounted their chariots in troops and came to see Rāma's wedding, trembling with love and with rapture in their hearts. When they saw Janak's city, they were so entranced that each accounted his own realm as little worth. Astonished, they gazed at the gorgeous pavilion and all the various magnificent erections and at the men and women of the city, perfect in beauty, elegant, pious, generous and wise. As they looked upon them, the gods and their consorts were like stars whose light grows dim in the radiance of the moon. Brahmā especially was astounded, for he nowhere saw aught that was the work of his own hands. [D. 314.] But Śiva thus admonished all the gods: 'Lose not yourselves in astonishment; be calm and bethink yourselves that this is the marriage of Sītā and Raghubir. [C. 312.] The very mention of their name cuts at the root of all that is accursed in the world, and brings within reach the four rewards of life. Such are Sītā and Rāma!'

So spake Śambhu, the enemy of Love, and having thus admonished the gods, forthwith spurred on his noble bull. The gods watched Daśarath advancing with a heart full of joy and a thrill of rapture; and with him was a company of saints and Brāhmans, looking like all the joys incarnate to do him service; accompanying him, too, were his four handsome sons, like the four orders of liberation<sup>1</sup> in human form. Beholding the noble pairs, of emerald and golden hue, the gods loved them exceedingly, and most glad were they when they looked on Rāma. They praised the king and rained down blossoms.

[D. 315.] Umā and Purāṇi felt a thrill of joy as they gazed again and again with tears in their eyes at the beauty of Rāma, handsome

<sup>1</sup> The four orders of *apavarga*, or liberation, are: *sālokya*, residence in the same realm as a god; *sāmīpya*, actual contact with a god; *sūrūpya*, being in the same form as a god; *sāyujya*, complete absorption into the Absolute.

from head to foot. [C. 313.] His limbs were dark as a peacock's glossy neck; his dress of beauteous hue gleamed brighter than the lightning; all kinds of nuptial ornaments he wore, all auspicious and altogether lovely. His comely face was like the spotless autumn moon, his eyes more bright than the newly opened lotus; none can describe his unearthly beauty; the soul must cherish its delight in silence. With him shone resplendent his charming brothers, making their mettlesome steeds curvet as they went; the princes were showing off the paces of their noble horses, and the panegyrists of the race were reciting songs of praise. The king of the birds himself felt shame as he watched the paces of the horse that Rāma rode; it was quite indescribably splendid, as though Kāmadeva had assumed the guise of a steed.

[Ch. 26.] As though for Rāma's sake Love himself had assumed the most beautiful guise of a steed, it charmed the whole world with its youth and strength and grace and perfect action; studded with fair pearls and rubies and other costly gems, its saddle was of dazzling brilliance, and when they saw the splendid bridle, hung with little bells, gods, men and sages were bewitched. [D. 316.] One with the will of its master, the graceful steed paced on, like a lovely peacock inspired to dance by a cloud silvered with stars and lightning flashes. [C. 314.] Not even Sāradā could describe the noble horse that Rāma rode.

Sāmkara was so delighted by Rāma's beauty that he was thankful to have fifteen eyes. When Hari gazed lovingly on Rāma, he and his consort were transported with delight. Glad was Brahmā to see Rāma's graceful form, and was sorry he had but eight eyes. The captain of the heavenly host was in an ecstasy, for he enjoyed the sight with half as many eyes again as Brahmā.<sup>1</sup> The all-wise king of the gods looked on Rāma and was very grateful for Gautama's curse.<sup>2</sup> All the gods were jealous of their king and cried, 'Today there is none like Purandara!' The gods were enchanted at the sight of Rāma, and in both the king's companies there was great delight.

[Ch. 27.] Great was the delight in both the kings' companies; loud beat the drums; happily the gods rained down flowers and cried, 'Glory, glory, glory to the jewel of the house of Raghu!'

So, when it was heard that the marriage procession was on its way, the music sounded loud, and the queen summoned the

<sup>1</sup> *senapa*: Svāmikārttika, who had six heads and therefore twelve eyes.

<sup>2</sup> Indra had a thousand eyes. For Gautama's curse, see App., s.v. Ahalyā.

damsels and prepared auspicious materials for the lustral rite. [D. 317.] Noble women with graceful gait<sup>1</sup> prepared the festal lamps and all that was most auspicious and went forth with happy hearts to perform the lustral rite; [C. 315.] all fair of face as the moon and with bright fawn-like eyes, each with a loveliness to humble Rati's pride, dressed in fine robes of many hues and decked with every kind of adornment, wearing on every limb auspicious ornaments, they sang their songs more sweetly than the sweet-voiced cuckoo; bracelets and anklets tinkled and bells upon their girdles; Love's elephants were ashamed to see their graceful gait. All manner of music played, and in the heavens and in the city were heard glad marriage songs. Śaci, Śāradā, Lakṣmī and Bhavāṇī, and all the pure wise goddesses disguised themselves as noble dames and went and met together in the women's chambers, and with sweet voices sang odes of gratulation. All were so happy that none guessed who they were.

[Ch. 28.] Who should recognize whom? In an ecstasy of bliss they went to celebrate the lustral rite over the Absolute, made bridegroom! Sweet were the songs and soft the music; the gods rained down flowers—a lovely sight indeed! All rejoiced to see the bridegroom, source of bliss; tears flooded their lotus eyes, and their fair limbs trembled with rapture.

[D. 318.] Not a thousand Śāradās and Śeṣas could tell in a hundred aeons the joy in the heart of Sītā's mother when she beheld Rāma's fair form. [C. 316.] Checking her tears—for the occasion was auspicious—the queen with cheerful heart duly performed the lustral rite and all the ceremonies prescribed in the Vedas and in the custom of the family. The five kinds of music<sup>2</sup> and the five sounds<sup>3</sup> were accompanied by songs of good omen; carpets of various kinds of cloth were laid down; the queen waved the lamp about his head and offered the oblation, and then Rāma proceeded to the pavilion, where were Daśarath and his retinue in all their glory. The very guardians of the world were abashed to behold their majesty. From time to time the gods rained down

<sup>1</sup> *gajagāminī*: lit. walking like elephants.

<sup>2</sup> *pañcaśabda*: music performed on the following five instruments: *tantrī* or *sitāra*, a stringed instrument; *tāla* and *jhānjha*, two kinds of cymbal; *nagara*, a drum; and *turahī*, a trumpet.

<sup>3</sup> *pañcādhvani*: these are the recitation of the Veda, songs of praise, cries of victory, the blowing of conches and music. Cf. B.D. 324.

flowers and Brāhmans recited the appropriate Śānti texts.<sup>1</sup> There was clamour in heaven and in the city; no one could hear his own voice or another's. So Rāma entered the pavilion, and after pouring a libation was seated on a throne.

[Ch. 29.] The women rejoiced when they seated him on the throne and waved the festal lamps about his head and gazed upon the bridegroom. Jewels, raiment and ornaments they lavished on him in abundance and sang auspicious odes. Brahmā and all the high gods, disguised as Brāhmans, watched the spectacle, and when they saw the beauty of the sun of the lotus race of Raghu, they reckoned their lives to have met with rich reward.

[D. 319.] The barbers and makers of leaf-plates, bards and acrobats, who received the gifts offered to Rāma, happily called down blessings on his head and bowed before him with hearts that could not contain their joy.

[C. 317.] Janak and Daśarath joined most affectionately in the performance of every Vedic and social rite; and the two great kings in their common observance were so glorious that the poet retires baffled from the search for a simile. Nowhere finding a comparison, he must admit defeat and merely say that they were like themselves. The gods gazed on the two fathers with passionate delight and showered down blossoms and began to sing their praises: 'From the time when Brahmā created the world many have been the weddings that we have seen or heard of, but now for the first time have we beheld such perfect preparations on both sides and fathers so well-matched!' At the sound of the divine words, so gracious and so true, they felt a wondrous love for one another; spreading carpets and offering libations, Janak courteously escorted his guest to the pavilion.

[Ch. 30.] When they saw the pavilion, the sages were enchanted by the beauty of its marvellous construction. With his own hands wise Janak brought and set seats for them all; he humbly worshipped Vasishtha as though he were his own patron deity and received his blessing, and the devotion with which he offered divine honours to Viśvāmitra cannot be described.

[D. 320.] Next, the king gladly paid reverence to Vāmadeva and the other seers; he gave them all exalted thrones and received the blessings of them all. [C. 318.] Again he offered worship to the king of Kosala, as though he were Iśa in very truth. With folded

<sup>1</sup> Sanskrit propitiatory texts to various deities.

hands he made his humble prayer and extolled his majesty, dwelling on his own great good fortune. To all the wedding guests the monarch reverently offered divine honours, even as to the bridegroom's father, and gave a fitting seat to each; but how can I describe the festal ceremonies with a single tongue? Janak honoured all the guests with gifts and due respect and modest compliments. Brahmā, Hari and Hara, the guardians of the quarters and the sun, who knew the power of Raghbir, disguised themselves as noble Brāhmans and witnessed the spectacle with great delight. Though Janak recognized them not, he gave them divine honours and allotted them high thrones.

[Ch. 31.] Who should recognize whom? They all lost consciousness of self, when they beheld the bridegroom, source of pure delight. Bliss reigned in either company. But the wise Rāma recognized the gods and worshipped them and enthroned them in his soul; and the gods were delighted to mark the loving-kindness of the Lord. [D. 321.] With exceeding love and gladness the bright eyes of each one reverently drank in the beauty of Rāmacandra's face, as the partridge the light of the moon.

[C. 319.] Perceiving that the hour had come, Vasiṣṭha sent for Śatānanda, who respectfully obeyed his summons. 'Go now at once and bring the princess,' said the sage, and Śatānanda gladly went to do his bidding. When the wise queen heard the priest's words, she and her maidens were overjoyed. She summoned the wives of the Brāhmans and the elder ladies of the family, and performed the rites of the house and sang festal songs. The high goddesses who had disguised themselves as mortal women were all of native loveliness and in the bloom of youth.<sup>1</sup> The ladies were charmed to see them; they recognized them not, yet loved them more than life. Again and again the queen did them honour as though they were Umā, Lakṣmi and Śāradā. They then adorned Sītā, and forming a company joyfully escorted her to the pavilion.

[Ch. 32.] With festal splendour the ladies and the handmaids reverently escorted Sītā, all of them lovely, adorned in the sixteen modes and moving with the proud grace of elephants. At the sound of their sweet songs the sages forgot their contemplation and Love's cuckoos were silenced; and sweet was the sound of their fair ornaments on ankle and foot and wrist as they tinkled to the beat of the cymbals.

<sup>1</sup> *śyāmā*: about sixteen years old.

[D. 322.] Sītā among the women shone forth in all her native loveliness like perfect beauty in the midst of a bevy of charms.

[C. 320.] No tongue can tell of Sītā's loveliness. Her captivating charm defies my humble wit. When the wedding guests saw Sītā coming, perfect in beauty and altogether pure, all did her mental obeisance, and Rāma, beholding her, found his dearest wish fulfilled. Daśarath and his sons rejoiced with a heartfelt joy beyond the telling. The gods greeted her with a shower of blossoms, and the sages blessed her with all auspicious blessings. Loud was the noise of song and music; men and women were lost in love and gladness. So Sītā came to the pavilion, and the lordly sages joyously repeated the Śānti texts, and the two family *gurus* performed all the rites and ceremonies and usages appropriate to that hour.

[Ch. 33.] After performing the ceremonies, the *guru* joyously directed the Brāhmans to offer worship to Gauri and Gaṇeśa. The gods revealed themselves to accept the worship and gave them their glad blessing. Honied curds<sup>1</sup> or whatsoever festal dish the sages desired at any time the servants stood ready to bring in plates and pitchers of gold. The Sun himself lovingly explained all his family rites, and after reverently conducting the worship of the gods as thus prescribed they brought Sītā to her glorious throne. None can imagine the mutual love with which Sītā and Rāma looked on one another; how can a poet express that which surpasses thought and reason and eloquence?

[D. 323.] At the time of the burnt-offering Agni himself became incarnate gladly to receive the oblation; and all the Vedas put on Brāhmaṇ form and expounded the marriage ritual.

[C. 321.] How can one describe Janak's illustrious queen, Sītā's mother, in whom the Creator had fashioned and combined fair fame, fair deeds, happiness and beauty? At the fit time the high sages summoned her, and at the summons her attendant maidens brought her with due reverence. On Janak's left came Sunayana, beautiful as Mayanā beside Himālaya. With their own hands the king and queen gladly brought and placed before Rāma golden vessels and lovely jewelled dishes full of holy water, pure and fragrant. The sages recited the Vedas in auspicious tones and from the sky fell flowers at this propitious hour. The royal pair

<sup>1</sup> *madhuparka*: a favourite dish of the gods, composed of mingled curds, butter, water, honey and sugar.

rejoiced as they looked on the bridegroom, and began to wash his holy feet.

[Ch. 34.] Trembling with rapturous love, they began to wash his lotus feet. From heaven and in the city songs and music and shouts of victory swelled forth exultant to the four quarters of the world. Those lotus feet that ever gleam bright on the lake that is Śiva's breast; by thinking on which but once the soul becomes stainless and all the defilement of the Kaliyuga is done away; by touching which the sage's sinful wife won liberation; whose honey<sup>1</sup> rests on Śambhu's head, and the gods call it perfect purity; to taste which sages and ascetics make their souls as bees and by their service win desired release—those feet did Janak wash, blessed above all mortal men, and all cried, 'Glory! Glory!'

The *gurus* of the two families joined the hands of the bridegroom and the bride and recited their pedigrees. So hand clasped hand, and when they saw it, Brahmā and the gods and men and sages were filled with rapture. Looking on the bridegroom, source of joy, the royal pair were in ecstasies and trembled with heartfelt emotion.

Then the glorious king performed all social and scriptural rites and gave his daughter in marriage to her lord. As Himālaya gave Girijā to Maheśa, and Ocean gave Lakṣmī to Hari, so did Janak entrust Sītā to Rāma, and the world was filled with glory, fair and fresh. How could Videha do reverence? The dark image of Rāma had robbed him of his senses. He offered the burnt sacrifice according to the rite and tied the knot, and the circling of the fire began.

[D. 324.] Hearing the shouts of triumph, the odes of the bards, the chanting of the Veda and the auspicious songs and music, the wise gods rejoiced and rained down blossoms from the tree of Paradise.

[C. 322.] The bride and the bridegroom gracefully circled the fire, and all with reverence feasted their eyes upon them. No tongue can describe the enchanting pair, no simile suffice. The lovely reflections of Rāma and Sītā glittered in the jewelled columns, as though Kāma and Rati, taking many forms, were watching Rāma's peerless marriage; again and again revealing themselves, curious to see the sight, and then, overcome by modesty, vanishing from view. All who looked on were enraptured and, like Janak,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the Ganges. See App., s.v. Gaṅgā.

lost consciousness of self. Joyfully the sages bade them circle the fire; they distributed gifts and performed every rite. Rāma applied vermillion to Sītā's head, a scene of unutterable charm. As red powder fills a lotus full, so the vermillion filled Rāma's hand; desiring her beauty, his outstretched arm adorned her face, as a serpent reaches out to the moon when greedy for ambrosia.<sup>1</sup> Then at Vasiṣṭha's bidding the bride and the bridegroom sat together on one seat.

[Ch. 35.] Rāma and Jānakī sat on the high throne, and as Daśarath gazed on them again and again, he rejoiced, overcome by emotion; for he saw his own merit bearing new fruit like the tree of Paradise. The worlds were full of gladness, and all cried, 'Rāma is wedded!' How can their blessed happiness be told? It was so great, and I have but one tongue.

Next, at Vasiṣṭha's bidding Janak made preparations for marriage and summoned the princesses Māṇḍavī, Śrutakīrti and Urmilā. Kuśaketu's eldest daughter, the pattern of virtue, gentleness, joy and beauty, the king gave in marriage to Bharat, affectionately celebrating every rite. Jānakī's younger sister, queen of beauty, he gave in marriage to Laksman with all due honour; and her who was called Śrutakīrti, bright-eyed, fair-faced and virtuous, renowned for her charm and gentle nature, the king bestowed on Śatrughna.

As the brides and the bridegrooms, so well-matched, gazed on one another, they were filled with modest joy. All were glad and praised their beauty, and the gods rained down flowers. The beauteous brides with their handsome husbands all shone resplendent in one pavilion, like the four states together with their conditions<sup>2</sup> united in the heart of a living soul.

[D. 325.] Beholding all his sons with their brides, the lord of Avadh was as happy as if that jewel of monarchs had found the four rewards together with the four religious duties.<sup>3</sup>

[C. 323.] All the princes were married with the same ceremonies as those I have described when Raghubir was wedded. The value

<sup>1</sup> An example of contracted simile (*luptopamā*), which must be expanded in translation.

<sup>2</sup> The four *avasthā* are: *jāgrat*, the waking state; *srapna*, sleep with dreams; *sueṣpti*, dreamless sleep; *turiya*, a pure intuitive consciousness, where there is no knowledge of objects, internal or external. The four *vibhu*, or conditions, of these states are called *viśva*, *taijasa*, *prājña*, and *brahma*. See Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, pp. 158ff.

<sup>3</sup> The four *kriyā* are variously enumerated, e.g. *yajña*, *śraddhā*, *yoga*, *jñāna*; or *sevā*, *śradhā*, *tapasya*, *bhakti*; or *anuṣṭhāna*, *udyoga*, *rati*, *virati*.

of the dowry defies description; the pavilion was filled with gold and jewels; blankets and garments and silks of every kind, all priceless, elephants, chariots, horses, men-servants and maid-servants, and cows adorned like the cow of plenty—everything in such profusion that none could reckon them; they must be seen to be believed! The guardians of the spheres were envious when they saw the dowry; the king of Avadh received it all with pleasure, and bestowed on the beggars what each desired; what remained over was taken to the guest-chambers. Then with folded hands Janak did honour to all the guests and addressed them in gentle tones.

[Ch. 36.] With reverence and gifts and modest prayers and praise he honoured all the guests, and with great joy and affectionate devotion paid worshipful homage to the company of sages. With bowed head and folded hands he called upon the gods and said to all, ‘Gods and saints crave but love; can the ocean be satisfied with the gift of a handful of water?’ Again with folded hands Janak and his brother spoke to the king of Kosala words overflowing with love and gracious kindness: ‘Now our alliance with you, O king, has greatly exalted our estate; hold us to be your servants, together with all our dominions, asking no reward. Cherish these our daughters as your handmaids, and ever treat them with compassion, and pardon our great presumption in inviting you.’

Then the jewel of the Solar race paid the bride’s father all the highest honours; their mutual courtesies cannot be described; their hearts were filled with love. The gods rained down flowers and the king retired to the guest-chamber amid the beat of drums and shouts of triumph and the recitation of the Veda and exultation in heaven and in the city. Then, singing marriage-songs, the fair maidens with the high sages’ leave brought the bridegrooms and the brides to the nuptial chamber.<sup>1</sup>

[D. 326.] Again and again did Sītā gaze on Rāma; her mien was modest, but her heart was bold; athirst for love, her eyes gleamed brighter than a beauteous fish.

[C. 324.] His dark-hued body with its native charm was of such beauty as to put a myriad Kāmadevas to the blush; and lovely were his lac-stained feet, haunted by the souls of sages as lotuses by bees. His pure yellow loin-cloth shone more beautiful and

<sup>1</sup> *kohabara*: a room where, at the time of a marriage, the household deities are set and certain nuptial ceremonies performed.

bright than the newly risen sun or the lightning flash. Round his waist were a fair girdle and a charming thread, and lovely ornaments adorned his long arms. Very lovely, too, was his yellow sacred thread, and the ring on his finger ravished the soul. Glorious was he, decked with all his marriage adornments, and on his broad breast the bright breast-ornaments. Over his left shoulder a yellow shawl was flung,<sup>1</sup> the two hemps sewn with pearls and other gems. With eyes like lotuses and fair earrings in his ears, his face was a perfect treasury of beauty. His eyebrows were lovely and his nose enchanting, and the caste-mark on his forehead passing fair. Charming was the nuptial crown upon his head, sewn with auspicious pearls and other gems.

[Ch. 37.] His beauteous nuptial crown was sewn with precious stones; his every limb was ravishing. The women of the city and fair goddesses all broke a blade of grass<sup>2</sup> as they gazed on the bridegroom. Jewels, raiment and ornaments they offered; they waved the festal lamps about his head and sang auspicious marriage-songs. The gods rained down flowers, and bards, panegyrists and minstrels proclaimed his great glory. Happy maidens brought the princes and princesses to the nuptial chamber, and very lovingly performed the customary rites with songs of fair omen. Gauri taught Rāma the ceremony of the interchange of morsels,<sup>3</sup> and Śāradā explained it to Sītā. In the women's apartments all was fun and merriment, and the ladies so enjoyed the sport that they all felt life was well worth living. When Jānaki saw the image of perfect beauty reflected in the jewels on her hand, she dared not move her eyes or supple arm for fear of losing him. The sport and jests and loving mirth challenge description; only her maidens comprehended them. Thereafter all the fair damsels escorted the bridegrooms and the brides to the guest-chambers.

At that hour blessings sounded in the ears of all, invoked in heaven and in the city, and all was perfect bliss. With glad hearts everybody cried, 'Long live the four lovely couples!' Great ascetics, adepts, high sages and gods beat their drums as they gazed on the Lord and departed with joy, each to his own sphere, raining down flowers and shouting, 'Glory! Glory! Glory!'

<sup>1</sup> *kāñkhāsottī*: the method of wearing a shawl over the left shoulder and under the right armpit.

<sup>2</sup> To avert the evil eye.

<sup>3</sup> *tahakaurī*: the bride and bridegroom exchange small portions of rice-milk in the nuptial chamber.

[D. 327.] Then all the princes came to their father with their brides; the guest-chambers seemed full to overflowing of beauty, felicity and joy.

[C. 325.] Next, a banquet of many different dishes was prepared, and Janak sent invitations to the wedding-guests. Carpets of priceless cloth were laid down, and the king arrived with his sons. Courteously Janak washed the feet of all his guests and seated each according to his degree. He washed the feet of Avadh's lord with a courtesy and affection beyond all telling; then he washed Rāma's lotus feet, which ever lie hidden in Hara's lotus heart; and with his own hands Janak washed the feet of the three brothers as though they were Rāma himself. To all the king assigned fitting seats and summoned all the cooks, who began respectfully to set out the dishes, wrought of jewelled leaves sewn together with golden pins. [D. 328.] In a moment the expert and polite cooks served all the guests with tasty, delicious and pure rice and pulse and *ghī* from the cow.

[C. 326.] The guests took the first five morsels<sup>1</sup> and began to eat, listening with great delight to scurrilous songs. All kinds of ambrosial confections were served, unspeakably delicious. The clever cooks began to serve all manner of sauces, of such variety that no one could know their names; and of each of all the four kinds of food that are distinguished there was an infinite variety of sorts. All kinds of rich sauces of the six flavours there were, and each flavour served in countless kinds of dish. During the banquet the ladies made scandalous jests in pleasant tones, mentioning men and women by name; very delightful were the jests and suited to the hour, and the king and all the company laughed to hear them. In this manner they all enjoyed the banquet, and water was courteously given them to rinse the hands and mouth.

[D. 329.] With due honour Janak offered *pān* to Daśarath and the other guests, and then the king of kings happily retired to his own chamber.

[C. 327.] There were ever new festivities in the city, and night and day passed like a moment. The glorious king woke up early in the morning and the beggars began to sing his praises. How can one describe the joy of his heart as he looked upon the princes

<sup>1</sup> *pañcakavala*: the first five morsels are taken with the repetition of five mantras, viz. *prāṇāya-svāhā*, *apāṇāya-svāhā*, *vyāṇāya-svāhā*, *udāṇāya-svāhā*, *samāṇāya-svāhā*, directed to the five vital breaths of the body.

and their lovely brides? After performing his morning duties he went to the *guru* with a heart full of blissful devotion; he made obeisance and did him reverence with folded hands and said in a voice of ambrosial sweetness, 'Hearken, lord of sages; it is of your grace that this day every desire of mine has been fulfilled. Now, holy father, summon all the Brāhmans and give them cows decked with every adornment.' Hearing this, the *guru* commended the monarch and then sent for the company of sages; [D. 330.] and there came Vāmadeva, the divine seer, Vālmīki, Jāvāli and the company of noble saints, with Viśvāmitra and the other ascetics.

[C. 328.] The king prostrated himself before them all and worshipped them and affectionately gave them exalted seats. He sent for four hundred thousand cows of noble breed, all as gentle as the cow of plenty. All these the king decked with every kind of ornament and gladly presented to the Brāhmans; and very humbly the monarch avowed that on that day his life had found its truest fulfilment. The king received their blessing and was glad.

Next, he sent for all the beggars, and asking each what he desired, the glory of the Solar race bestowed on them raiment, horses, elephants and chariots. They went off singing his praises and acclaiming his generosity, with cries of 'Glory, glory, glory to the lord of the Solar race!' So passed the festivities at Rāma's wedding, which not even Śeṣa could describe with his thousand tongues.

[D. 331.] Again and again the king bowed his head before Viśvāmitra's feet and said, 'O lord of sages, all this happiness is due to your benign regard!'

[C. 329.] The king was loud in his praises of Janak's love and kindness and noble actions and splendour. Every day when he rose, the lord of Avadh asked permission to depart, but Janak lovingly detained him. Fresh courtesies were constantly shown him, and every day a thousand kinds of entertainment were devised. In the city were ever new rejoicings and festivities and no one liked to think of Daśarath's departure. Many days passed in this way, as though the wedding guests were bound by the bonds of love. Then Viśvāmitra and Śatānanda went to the king of Videha and thus advised him: 'Grant now Daśarath leave to depart, even though for very love you would not let him go.' 'Very well, lord,' he said, and sent for his ministers, who bowed before him and said, 'Long live the king!'

[D. 332.] 'Make it known,' said Janak, 'in the queens' chambers that the lord of Avadh is about to depart.' Hearing this, the ministers, Brāhmans and councillors, as well as the king himself, were greatly moved. [C. 330.] When the citizens heard that the guests were about to depart, they were dismayed and asked one another if it were true; and when they heard that they were really going, they fell into melancholy, as lotuses close their petals in the evening. Wherever the guests had stayed on arrival, thither all sorts of provisions were sent, various kinds of fruit and confections, and an indescribable amount of food materials, all laden on innumerable bullocks and porters. Janak sent also a number of comfortable beds,<sup>1</sup> a hundred thousand horses and twenty-five thousand chariots, all adorned throughout; ten thousand proud elephants, too, richly caparisoned, at the sight of which the elephants of the quarters were mortified, with wagons full of gold and raiment and jewels; buffaloes, too, and cows and all things needed. [D. 333.] A limitless dowry, again, beyond all telling Videha gave, compared with which the wealth of the spheres was a mere nothing in the eyes of their lords.

[C. 331.] When Janak had thus made ready all his gifts, he sent them on to the city of Avadh. When the queens heard that the procession was about to start, they were as agitated as fish when the water is low. Again and again they clasped Sītā to their bosoms and gave her their blessing and their instruction: 'May you ever be loved by your husband; live long, a happy wife; this is our blessing. Do service to your husband's father and mother and the *guru*; observe your lord's will and obey his commands.' Her wise maidens, too, with the utmost affection taught her in gentle tones of woman's duty. The queens instructed all the brides in kindly wise and again and again clasped them to their hearts; and time after time as they embraced them, their mothers said, 'Why has Brahmā created women ?'

[D. 334.] At that hour came Rāma, Banner of the Solar race, with his brothers; joyfully he came to Janak's palace to bid him farewell. [C. 332.] All the men and women of the city ran to see the four handsome brothers. One said, 'Today they are about to set forth; Videha has made arrangements for their departure. Feast your eyes on the beauty of our beloved guests, the king's four sons. Who knows for what merit of ours, wise maiden,

<sup>1</sup> *susārā*: thus the *śikā*: another reading is *suārā*, cooks.

Brahmā has brought these visitors to bless our eyes? Like a dying man who finds nectar, or one who has always been hungry and comes upon the tree of Paradise, or a sinner destined for hell who finds the feet of Hari, so are we blessed by the sight of these. Gaze upon Rāma's beauty and lay it up in your hearts; make your soul the serpent and his image the jewel! Even so all the princes rejoiced the eyes of all as they went to the royal palace.

[D. 335.] The ladies of the court rose in delight when they beheld all the brothers in their wondrous beauty; and the brides' mothers in rapturous joy scattered gifts and waved the lustral lamps about their heads. [C. 333.] In an ecstasy of devotion they looked on Rāma's beauty; constrained by love, again and again they touched his feet. They felt no shame, for their hearts were filled with affection; no words can tell the love they could not but feel. They bathed him and his brothers and rubbed their bodies with unguents and affectionately entertained them with a meal of the six flavours. Then seeing that the hour had come, in courteous, loving and modest tones Rāma spoke: 'The king is about to set out for the city of Avadh and has sent us here to bid you farewell. Mother, be pleased to give us leave, and ever think of us with love as your own children.'

The ladies were grieved to hear him and the brides' mothers for very love could speak no word. They all clasped their daughters to their hearts and then entrusted them to their lords with earnest prayers. [Ch. 38.] With folded hands Sītā's mother made her petition as she entrusted her to Rāma. Again and again she said, 'You, dear son, I doubt not, are all-wise and know the thoughts of all. Know that Sītā is dear as life itself to her own kin, the people of the city, the king and myself. Regard her goodness and her love, O Tulasi's lord, and accept her as your own hand-maiden. [S. 336.] In you, O Rāma, are all desires fulfilled; you are the crown of wisdom, lover of love; you recognize the virtue of the faithful and destroy demerit, Lord of compassion!'

[C. 334.] So saying, the queen still clasped his feet, as though her speech were sunk in the quicksand of love. Hearing her tender, affectionate plea, Rāma paid Sītā's mother every respect. With folded hands he begged her leave to depart, and again and again did obeisance. Raghurāi received her blessing, and once more bowing his head, set out with his brothers. All the queens laid up in their hearts his sweet and charming image and grew faint with love. Then, composing themselves, the mothers called their

daughters to them and repeatedly embraced them. They led them on, and then again turned to embrace them, and ever greater grew their mutual love. Time after time the maidens put aside their mothers as they embraced their daughters, as one separates a cow from her new-born heifers.

[D. 337.] All the men and women, the attendants and the ladies of the court, were overpowered by loving emotion. It was as though Piteousness and Separation had made their dwelling in the city of Videha. [C. 335.] The parrot and the *mainā* that Jānakī had kept as pets in golden cages and taught to speak cried in distress, 'Where is the princess of Videha?', and all who heard the cry were moved. And if the birds and beasts were thus distressed, how can the people's feelings be described?

Then came Janak with his brother; his heart overflowed with love and his eyes were filled with tears. He was renowned for his detachment, yet, when he looked on Sītā, all his composure fled. The king clasped Jānaki to his heart; broken down were the strong restraints of wisdom. All his wise ministers remonstrated with him, and reckoning this no time for grief, he calmed himself. Time and again he clasped his daughter to his bosom, and then ordered a gaily decorated palanquin.

[D. 338.] The courtiers were all overpowered by emotion. The king, perceiving that the auspicious moment had arrived, seated the princesses in their palanquins, with his thoughts fixed on Ganeśa who brings success. [C. 336.] The king gave his daughters much good counsel and taught them their wifely duties and the customs of his house; he gave them, too, a number of menservants and handmaidens, whom Sītā loved and trusted to serve her. The citizens were distressed at Sītā's departure; but fair omens promised all happiness, as the king, with a company of Brāhmans and ministers, set forth to escort them on their way. Music sounded, appropriate to the hour, and the wedding guests made ready their chariots and elephants and horses. Daśarath summoned all the Brāhmans and made them well content with gifts and honours. Placing the dust of their lotus feet upon his head and receiving their blessings, the monarch joyously set out on his journey with his thoughts on Ganeśa and attended by fair omens that promised success. [D. 339.] Joyfully the gods rained down flowers and the Apsarās sang songs; happily the lord of Avadh set out for his capital to the sound of music.

[C. 337.] The king courteously dismissed his distinguished escort to their homes and graciously sent for all the mendicants, on whom he bestowed ornaments and raiment and horses and elephants, and so affectionately entreated them that he made them rich indeed; they all returned with paeans of praise, treasuring Rāma in their hearts. Though the king of Kosala again and again besought him, Janak for very love would not turn back. Once more the monarch spoke persuasively: 'Return, O king; you have come very far,' and dismounting, stood before him, his eyes brimming over with tears of love. Then with folded hands Videha spoke, in a voice steeped, as it were, in the nectar of affection: 'What words can I use, all unworthy? Great king, you have highly exalted me!'

[D. 340.] The lord of Kosala highly honoured Sitā's father, now his own kinsman; they embraced with the utmost courtesy and their hearts could not contain the love they felt. [C. 338.] Janak bowed his head before the assembly of sages and received a blessing from them all. Then he reverently embraced all the brothers, his sons-in-law, treasures of beauty, loving-kindness and virtue; and folding his fair lotus hands, he said in tones that love begat, 'O Rāma, how can I praise thee, who art the swan on the holy lake that is the soul of the sages and Maheśa? Thou for whose sake ascetics turn from wrath and ignorance and selfishness and pride to practise their austerities; thou, the all-pervading Absolute, invisible and indestructible, Consciousness and Bliss, impersonal and personal; whom neither speech nor thought can comprehend, nor any argument infer; thou whose greatness the Vedas declare to be "Not thus"; one and the same yesterday, today and for ever; [D. 341.] thou, O source of every joy, hast become manifest to my sight; in thee all creatures in the world find every blessing, if God grant it to them! [C. 339.] Thou hast exalted me to highest heights; thou hast held me to be thine own servant and made me thine own. Were there ten thousand Śāradās and Śeṣas, reckoning for full a myriad aeons,—believe me, O Raghunāth—they could not make an end of telling my good fortune and the tale of thy perfections. Whatever I am saying, I dare to say because I know that thou art pleased with love, however feeble. Again and again I beseech thee with folded hands that never for a moment may my soul desert thy feet!'

When he heard these noble words, fruit of devoted love, Rāma, whose every desire is fulfilled, was pleased. With gracious modesty

he did honour to his father-in-law as the equal of his father, Viśvāmitra or Vasishtha. Then Janak bade a courteous farewell to Bharat, lovingly embraced him and gave him his blessing. [D. 342.] The king then embraced Laksman and Śatrughna and blessed them; overpowered by love for one another, they repeatedly bowed the head.

[C. 340.] With many a courteous compliment Raghupati set forth with all his brothers. Janak went and clasped Viśvāmitra's feet and placed their dust upon his head and eyes. 'Hear me,' he said, 'O lord of sages; now that I have been favoured by your presence all things are possible to me—that is my sure belief; that bliss and fair renown which the lords of the spheres desire, yet hesitate to crave, I find within my grasp, O master; for all success attends upon your presence.' Again and again the monarch humbly bowed his head and turned homeward with the sage's blessing.

So the procession set forth to the sound of music, and the whole assemblage, great and small, rejoiced; and as they gazed on Rāma, the men and women of the villages were enraptured at the glorious sight.

[D. 343.] Halting from time to time at convenient stages on the road to the great delight of the people, on an auspicious day the procession drew near to Avadh. [C. 341.] Loud beat the kettledrums and the big drums rolled; there was a clamour of pipes and conches, horses neighed and elephants trumpeted; cymbals clashed and side-drums sounded sweetly; hautboys made tuneful melody. When the citizens heard that the procession was approaching, they all rejoiced and trembled with delight; each decorated his own fair house, the markets, the streets, the squares and the city gates. All the lanes were watered with mingled perfumes, and everywhere were squares filled in with lovely patterns. No words can tell the beauty of the market-place, decked with triumphal arches, flags and banners and canopies. Arecas, plantain and mango trees, *maulasaris*,<sup>1</sup> *kadambas*<sup>2</sup> and *tamālas*, all laden with fruit, were planted there, so burdened that their branches touched the ground, and the basins round their roots were exquisitely set with precious stones. [D. 344.] All kinds of festal vessels were made and set up in every house;

<sup>1</sup> *bakula*, or *maulasari*: *Mimusops elengi*, with very fragrant flowers and medicinal bark.

<sup>2</sup> *kadamba*: *Nauclea cadamba*, with fragrant orange-coloured blossoms.

Brahmā and all the gods were envious when they saw Raghubar's city.

[C. 342.] At that time the king's palace was so gorgeous that Love himself was fascinated when he saw the decorations. It was as though fair omens, beauty, success and joy, rich wealth and every kind of happiness had all assumed sweet forms of natural loveliness to grace the home of Daśarath. And as for Rāma and the princess of Videha, say, who did not long to behold them? Came troops of damsels, whose beauty put Kāma's lovely consort to the blush; all were singing, with festal lamps and auspicious objects in their hands, as though Bhārati had multiplied her forms. In the king's palace was the sound of revelry; none can describe the joy the moment brought; Kausalyā and the other queens were beside themselves with overpowering love.

[D. 345.] Many were the gifts they bestowed upon the Brāhmans, worshipping Gaṇeśa and Purāri, as happy as a destitute beggar who finds the four rewards. [C. 343.] The queens were all so overcome with joy and rapture that they waxed faint and could not move. Passionately yearning for a sight of Rāma, they all began to prepare materials for the lustral offering. All kinds of music were heard; joyfully Sumitrā made ready her festal oblations —turmeric and sacred grass, curds, leaves and flowers, betel, areca nuts and all that is auspicious; rice, too, and sprouting corn, yellow powder and parched grain and sweet clusters of the *tulasī* plant in exquisite painted vases of gold, as though Love's birds had built their nests. Auspicious perfumes beyond description and all fair-omened offerings all the queens prepared; they made ready festal lamps of every kind and with glad hearts sang cheerful marriage songs.

[D. 346.] Bearing in their lotus hands golden trays laden with these auspicious offerings, the queens went to pour out the libation, trembling with joy. [C. 344.] The sky was black with the smoke of the incense, as though the clouds of Śrāvāna had gathered overhead. The gods rained down garlands of flowers from the tree of Paradise, catching the fancy like rows of cranes in flight. The beautiful jewelled festoons were like the arch of Indra's bow; fair women on the balconies, now showing themselves, now hiding, resembled lightning flashes in their restless movement. The noise of the drums was like the loud pealing of thunder-clouds, and the beggars as clamorous as cuckoos, frogs and peacocks. The gods

rained down showers of pure fragrance, refreshing the men and women of the city as rain refreshes the crops.

Perceiving that the hour had come, the *guru* gave the word, and the glorious monarch of the house of Raghu made his entry with his retinue, thinking on Śambhu, Girijā and Ganeśa, and glad at heart. [D. 347.] There were good omens and the gods rained down flowers and beat their drums, while the goddesses danced for joy and sang sweet festive strains.

[C. 345.] Panegyrist, bards, minstrels and expert dancers sang the glory of him who illuminates the three spheres. Shouts of triumph and the pure and pious recitation of the Vedas were heard throughout the world's ten quarters, sounds of felicity; many an instrument began to play; gods in heaven and people in the city were overjoyed. The splendour of the procession defies description; all were passing glad, nor could they contain their joy.

The citizens did obeisance to the king, and right glad were they to see Rāma. With brimming eyes and trembling limbs they scattered offerings of gems and raiment. Happily the women of the city waved their festal lamps, rejoicing to behold the four gallant princes; and drawing aside the fair curtains of the palanquins, they were gladdened by the sight of the brides.

[D. 348.] In this manner they arrived at the palace gate, bringing joy to all, and the queens happily performed the lustral rite for the princes and their brides. [C. 346.] Again and again they waved the festal lamps about their heads with unutterable love and joy; all kinds of adornments, jewels and apparel they lavished on them in limitless profusion. When they saw their four sons with their brides, the queens experienced the highest bliss, and gazing again and again on the beauty of Sītā and Rāma, they joyously accounted their lives to be blessed indeed. Again and again the maidens looked on Sītā's face and with glad songs extolled the merit they had won. Moment by moment the gods rained down flowers and danced and sang and did reverence. Beholding the four enchanting pairs, Sāradā ransacked her store of similes, but none could she find, they all seemed too trivial, and she could only fix her gaze upon them, entranced by their beauty.

[D. 349.] Having performed the ceremonies prescribed by the Vedas and the custom of the family, they brought all their sons and their brides to the palace, spreading ceremonial carpets and waving lustral lamps. [G. 347.] On four magnificent thrones that Kāmadeva might have wrought with his own hands they

seated the princes and princesses and reverently washed their sacred feet. Then with incense and lights and oblations, as Vedic ritual prescribes, they paid divine honours to the bridegrooms and the brides, in whom all fortune dwelt. Time after time they waved the festal lamps about their heads and fanned them with charming fans and whisks. Gifts of all kinds were showered upon them, for all the queens were as full of joy as an ascetic who attains to highest truth, or a bed-ridden invalid who has found ambrosia, or a life-long beggar who has come upon the philosopher's stone, or a blind man who has received the blessing of sight, or a dumb man granted the gift of speech, or a warrior victorious in battle.

[D. 350a.] The bliss the queens experienced was a thousand million times greater than this, now that the moon of the house of Raghu was wedded and had returned home with his brothers. [350b.] When the queens performed the customary rites, the bridegrooms and their brides were embarrassed; but Rāma smiled to himself when he saw their great joy and merriment.

[C. 348.] They worshipped the gods and the Fathers, as was due, for all the desires of their hearts had been fulfilled; to all they did homage and asked but this boon that Rāma and his brothers might be for ever blessed. The gods, invisible, granted this blessing, and the queens received it joyfully with outspread robes. Then the king summoned the wedding guests, and gave them carriages and raiment and gems and ornaments; they then took their leave and returned happily, each to his own home, treasuring Rāma in their hearts.

The king then clothed all the men and women of the city in festal robes, and joyous songs and music were heard in every house. On each one of the beggars the king gladly bestowed whatever he asked, and all the servants and musicians he satisfied with gifts and honours. [D. 351.] They all blessed him and did him homage and sang the story of his virtues. Then with the *guru* and the Brāhmans the monarch retired to his palace.

[C. 349.] He reverently performed the social and religious rites as Vasiṣṭha bade him. When the queens saw the throng of Brāhmans, they all respectfully arose, congratulating themselves on their good fortune. The king washed their feet and bathed them all and feasted them with worshipful reverence; well content with his respect and gifts and loving devotion, they blessed him and departed satisfied. The king then paid Viśvāmitra divine honours and said, 'Lord, there is none so blest as I'. The monarch

praised him with all praise, and with the queens took the dust of his feet. He gave him a splendid apartment within the palace, where he and the queens could wait upon his every wish. Again he humbly worshipped his *guru*'s lotus feet with exceeding devotion in his heart.

[D. 352.] Together with the brides, the princes and the queens, the king again and again did homage to the *guru*'s feet, and the high sage gave them his blessing. [C. 350.] With a heart full of devotion the king set his sons and all his wealth before him and begged him to accept them; but the lord of sages would only claim the customary gifts and showered his blessings on him. Then the *guru* gladly returned to his house with Rāma and Sītā laid upon his heart.

The king then summoned all the Brāhmans' wives and bestowed on them robes of honour and ornaments. Next, he sent for the honourable women of the city and gave them whatever raiment their hearts desired; each claimant, too, received the customary present, the great king giving each what he most craved. The king gave all honour to the guests he held in love and reverence, and the gods who had witnessed the marriage of Raghubir rained down flowers and praised the festive scene, [D. 353.] and joyously departed with beat of drum each to his own city, reciting to one another the glory of Rāma with uncontrollable devotion.

[C. 351.] Having thus done everyone all honour, the monarch was filled with joy. He took his way to the ladies' chambers, and there he saw the princes and their brides. He took them to his bosom in a rapturous embrace, and who can tell the measure of his joy? Lovingly he seated the brides on his lap, again and again caressing them with happiness in his heart. All the ladies were delighted at the scene, and Bliss made her dwelling in their hearts. The king told them all about the wedding, and right glad were they to hear the story. He told of king Janak's virtue and kindliness and majesty, the affection he displayed and the magnificence of his wealth, all as a bard might tell, and the queens were all overjoyed to hear the tale.

[D. 354.] When the king and his sons had bathed, he invited the Brāhmans, the *guru* and his kinsfolk, and entertained them at a banquet of varied dishes till two hours of the night were spent.

[C. 352.] The fair ladies sang marriage songs; the night was delightfully and pleasurable spent. They all rinsed their mouths and took *pān* and looked charming, wreathed in garlands of fragrant

flowers. Gazing on Rāma, they took permission to leave, and each guest bowed and retired to his own house. Not a hundred Sarasvatis, Śeṣas, Vedas, Brahmās, Maheśas or Gaṇeśas could describe the love and fun and merriment and splendour of that hour and the bewitching beauty of that scene; then how can I tell of it? Can a worm support the earth on its head?

After doing all honour to his guests, the king summoned the queens and said in gentle tones, 'The brides are still but children and have come to a strange house; watch over them as eyelids guard the eyes. [D. 355.] The boys are tired and sleepy; go now and put them to bed.' With these words he retired to his bed-chamber with Rāma's feet in his thoughts.

[C. 353.] Hearing the king's kindly words, they prepared a jewelled bed of gold and spread thereon white sheets as beautiful and soft as the froth of a cow's milk, with pillows finer than words can tell. Fragrant garlands hung in the jewelled room, and there were lamps set with gems and lovely canopies, so beautiful that words are of no avail; only those who saw them could understand their charm. Thus they made ready this beautiful couch and, raising Rāma, lovingly placed him on the bed. Again and again he bade his brothers go to rest, until they went to sleep upon their several couches.

When they beheld his dark-hued limbs, so soft and delicate, the queens all affectionately said, 'How, dear son, did you slay upon your journey the grim and dreadful Tārakā? [D. 356.] How did you slay the fearsome demons, fierce warriors who recked nought of any on the field, the villainous Mārīca and Subāhu with their hosts? [C. 354.] I vow, my son, it was by the favour of the sage that God averted from you so many disasters. You two brothers protected the sacrifice and of your *guru*'s grace won to all knowledge. The sage's wife attained salvation as soon as the dust of your feet touched her, a glorious tale renowned throughout the world. In the assembly of the princes you broke the bow of Śiva, less flexible than a tortoise-shell or thunderbolt or mountain peak. The glory of universal triumph you won, and Jānakī too; and you and all your brothers have returned home wedded. All these acts of yours are beyond the power of mortal man, and it is only the grace of Viśvāmitra that has brought them to fulfilment. This day our lives are blest indeed, for we behold your face, dear son, fair as the moon. Those days that have passed without our seeing you may God not reckon as spent!'

[D. 357.] Rāma consoled all the queens with modest and seemly words, and fixing his thoughts on Śarībhu, his *guru* and the Brāhmans' feet, he closed his eyes in sleep. [C. 355.] In sleep his comely face gleamed fair as a red lotus at eventide. In every house women kept vigil, jesting with one another merrily. 'See, dear friends,' cried the queens, 'how bright is the city, how bright the night!' The mothers slept with the beautiful brides in their arms, like serpents that have hidden in their bosoms the jewels of their heads.

Early in the morning the Lord awoke at that holy hour when cocks begin to crow; bards and panegyrists were singing his praises, and the citizens were at the door to do him reverence. All the brothers did homage to the Brāhmans and the gods, their *guru* and their parents, and gladly received their blessing. The queens looked with reverence on their faces; then with the king the princes stepped to the door.

[D. 358.] Pure as they were, they all performed their daily duties and bathed in the sacred river. Then the four brothers engaged in their morning devotions and returned to their father.

[C. 356.] When the king saw them, he clasped them to his heart; then with his permission they gladly took their seats. As they gazed on Rāma, the whole court was gladdened, believing that their eyes could never see a sight more blessed. Then came Vasiṣṭha the sage and Viśvāmitra; the king seated the sages on exalted thrones and with his sons worshipped them and touched their feet. The two *gurus* were overjoyed to see Rāma. Vasiṣṭha related sacred stories, and the king and his queens listened. Many a tale did Vasiṣṭha gladly tell of the wondrous deeds of Viśvāmitra, incomprehensible even to a sage. Said Vāmadeva, 'It is all quite true; his great renown is famed in the three spheres'. All were delighted when they heard it; and in the heart of Rāma and Laksman was exceeding joy.

[D. 359.] Thus passed the days in never-ceasing joy and glad festivity, and Avadh overflowed with bliss—more and ever more.

[C. 357.] An auspicious day was chosen and the wrist-thread was unbound<sup>1</sup> amid great festive merriment. The gods, beholding ever new delights, were envious and besought the Creator for rebirth in Avadh. Viśvāmitra was ever desirous to depart, but yielded to

<sup>1</sup> Some days before marriage a piece of cloth containing small auspicious objects is bound round the bridegroom's wrist; after the wedding this is removed.

Rāma's loving persuasion and stayed. Perceiving the king's affection to increase a hundredfold day by day, the great and royal sage was full of praises. When at last he asked permission to depart, the king and his sons with the utmost devotion stood before him. 'Lord,' said the king, 'all that I have is yours; I and my sons and my wives are your servants. Be ever gracious to my boys, O sage, and grant me from time to time the honour of your presence.' With these words the king and his sons and the queens fell at his feet and could say no more. The Brāhmaṇa showered blessings upon them and departed; no words can tell the affection they displayed. Rāma and all his brothers lovingly escorted him on his way and at his bidding returned. [D. 360.] Inwardly lauding the beauty of Rāma, the king's devotion and the joyous wedding festivities, the moon of the house of Gādhi went on his way rejoicing.

[C. 358.] Vāmadeva and the wise *guru* of the house of Raghu again related stories about Viśvāmitra; and when he heard the sage's glorious deeds, the king silently congratulated himself on the effect of his own meritorious acts. The people were then dismissed to their homes, and the king and his sons returned to the palace. Everywhere all were telling the story of Rāma's wedding, and the three spheres resounded with his fair and holy fame.

From the day when Rāma returned home wedded, all bliss took up its abode at Avadh. Not even Sarasvatī or the Serpent King could describe the joyful festivities that marked the marriage of the Lord; but believing the glory of Rāma and Sītā, wherein all blessing dwells, to purify the life of every poet, I have tried to sing their praises, that my own voice may be thus sanctified.

[Ch. 39.] (Tulasi has told of the glory of Rāma to sanctify his voice; but the acts of Raghubir are a boundless ocean; what poet can cross to the further bound? All those who reverently hear and sing the auspicious story of the festive rejoicing that attended his investiture with the sacred thread and his wedding will by the grace of Rāma and the princess of Videha win to everlasting joy.

[S. 361.] Yea, those who devoutly sing and hear of the wedding of Sītā and Raghubir will ever enjoy the highest bliss; for the glory of Rāma is the home of every blessing.)

## A Y O D H Y Ā

[**Sloka.**] May he in whose bosom shines glorious the daughter of the mountain and on whose head is the river of the gods; he on whose forehead lies the crescent moon; he on whose throat is the stain of poison, and on whose breast lies the Serpent King; ash-smeared, chiefest of the gods and lord of all, destroyer, all-pervading, auspicious, bright as the moon, the Lord Śāṅkara, ever protect me!

May the brightness of the lotus face of Raghunandan, that knew no joy at his enthronement, no melancholy at his sad exile to the forest, ever bring me perfect bliss!

Him I adore whose limbs are delicate and dark as the dark-blue lotus, on whose left side Sītā sits enthroned, who carries in his hands great arrows and a graceful bow, Rāma, lord of the house of Raghu!

[**Dohā.**] (Cleansing the mirror of my soul with the dust of the holy *guru*'s lotus feet, I tell of the spotless glory of Raghubar, giver of the four rewards.)

[C. 1.] From the day when Rāma returned home wedded, there were ever fresh rejoicings and festive celebrations. Merit showered happiness on the fourteen worlds as clouds shed rain on the mighty mountains. Success, prosperity and wealth flowed like brimming rivers into Avadh's ocean, and the high-born men and women of the city were jewel-clusters, altogether pure and priceless and lovely. The splendour of the city was past all telling; it seemed the final work of the Creator. All the citizens were utterly happy as they gazed on Rāmacandra's face, fair as the moon. Happy, too, were the mothers and all their maidens and companions, seeing their desires, like a creeper, bearing fruit; and overjoyed was the king when he saw and heard tell of Rāma's beauty and virtue and generous nature.

[D. 1.] In the hearts of all was one desire; they besought Maheśa that the king would invest Rāma with the regency before he died.

[C. 2.] One day king Daśarath sat enthroned in the assembly with all his courtiers. The monarch, himself the image of all goodness, was overjoyed to hear of Rāma's fair renown. All kings desired his favour; the guardians of the spheres loved him and were

his friends; no man in all the world so blest as Daśarath, in the three spheres, in time past, present and to come. Words fail to describe his blessed state whose son was Rāma, source of all good fortune.

The king chanced to take a mirror in his hand, and looking at his face, set his crown straight. Close to his ear were white hairs that seemed like old age directing him: 'O king, make Rāma regent and thus fulfil the purpose of your life!'

[D. 2.] So purposing in his heart, the king chose an auspicious day and season, and in an ecstasy of love gladly went and told his *guru* of his intention. [C. 3.] 'Hearken, lord of sages,' said the king; 'Rāma is in all ways altogether worthy. Servants, ministers and all who dwell in the city, whether they be my foes or friends or neither, without exception love Rāma as I myself, as though my lord's blessing had taken a glorious bodily form. The Brāhmans and their families, holy saint, all hold him dear as you do. Those who place on their heads the dust of their *guru*'s feet command all power as their own; this have I experienced as none other, and I have won it all by adoration of your sacred dust. Now I have one desire at heart; by your favour, lord, it will be fulfilled.'

The sage was pleased to see his heartfelt love and said, 'Tell me, O king, your will. [D. 3.] O king, your name and glory ensure fulfilment of all desires; monarch supreme is your heart's wish, success its faithful follower.'<sup>1</sup>

[C. 4.] Finding the *guru* so well disposed, the king was pleased and gently replied, 'My lord, make Rāma regent, and of your grace order preparation to be made. Let this glad ceremony take place while I still live, that the eyes of all the people may rejoice to see it. By my lord's favour Śiva has brought all to fulfilment. Only this one longing remains in my heart; after that I care not whether this body of mine lingers or departs, so I have later nought to regret.'

When the sage heard Daśarath's noble words, the source of fortune and joy to be, he was pleased. 'Hear me, O king,' he said; 'he whose enemies rue their folly, he without whose worship the fire of pain is not extinguished, has been born your son, the Lord Rāma, servant of perfect love. [D. 4.] Haste, O king, and delay not;

<sup>1</sup> Or, taking *mahipamani* as vocative, 'Success, O monarch supreme, is the faithful follower of your heart's desire.' The *sikṣa* explains: 'The desire of your heart, O king, follows its fulfilment,' i.e., you get what you want even before you desire it.

make all preparations. Fair and fortunate that day when Rāma becomes regent !'

[C. 5.] Happily the king returned to his palace and summoned his servants and his minister, Sumantra. They cried, 'Long live the king !' and bowed their heads; and the king told them the glad news. 'If,' he said, 'it meets with my counsellors' approval, then be pleased to mark Rāma's forehead with the sign of regency.' The minister was as glad to hear this welcome news as though rain had fallen on the seedling of his desire. With folded hands he prayed, 'May the lord of the world live ten million years ! You have determined on a noble act that will bring good fortune to the world; haste, lord, and lose no time !'

The king was as pleased to hear his minister's ready assent as a fast-climbing creeper that has clung to a supporting branch.

[D. 5.] 'Whatever the lord of sages commands,' he said, 'that do with speed in preparation for Rāma's installation as regent.'

[C. 6.] Gladly the high sage bade them in gentle tones bring water from all the holiest places; he then enumerated all kinds of auspicious objects—medicinal herbs, roots, flowers, fruits and leaves; whisks, too, and hides and all kinds of raiment, countless sorts of woollen and silken garments, jewels and every auspicious thing in the world that was fitted for a royal investiture. He instructed them in all the ritual forms prescribed in the Vedas, and added, 'Set up in the city a number of pavilions, and plant in all the city streets fruit-bearing mango trees, arecas and plantain trees; trace lovely squares filled with precious stones and bid men quickly decorate the market-place. Worship Ganeśa, the *guru* and the patron deity of the family, and do all reverence to the Brāhmans.

[D. 6.] Make ready flags and banners, triumphal arches and vessels, horses and chariots and elephants.'

Obedient to the great sage's word, each one set about his own special business. [C. 7.] Each carried out the orders the high sage had given him, as it seemed, before he was bidden. The king offered worship to the Brāhmans, the saints and the gods, and made all festive preparations for Rāma. As soon as the welcome news of Rāma's installation was heard, jubilant strains resounded through Avadh; fair omens declared themselves in the bodies of Rāma and Sitā, omens of good fortune in the quivering of their sides. Trembling with love, they said to one another, 'These omens betoken the coming of Bharat; he has been a long time away and we have been very anxious to see him, and the omens

predict of a certainty that we shall meet a loved one; and who in the world is so dear to us as Bharat? This and nothing else must be the meaning of the omens.' Day and night Rāma felt as anxious about his brother as a turtle about her eggs.<sup>1</sup>

[D. 7.] The ladies of the court were overjoyed when they heard these very welcome tidings, just as the waves of the sea swell with delight when they see the waxing moon. [C. 8.] Those who were the first to go and spread the news received as gifts a quantity of ornaments and raiment, and they all began to make ready festal vessels, trembling with affection and with hearts full of love. Sumitrā filled all sorts of beautiful and very charming squares with jewels, and Rāma's mother, beside herself with joy, sent for numbers of Brāhmans and presented them with gifts. She worshipped the local deities and the gods and the serpents and vowed them further offerings, saying, 'Of your compassion grant Rāma all that may be for his welfare!' Women with voices sweet as the cuckoo's, faces as fair as the moon and eyes like the eyes of fawns sang festal songs. [D. 8.] Men and women rejoiced when they heard of Rāma's investiture as regent, and began to make all festal preparations, thinking that God was showing them his favour.

[C. 9.] Then the monarch summoned Vasistha and sent him to Rāma's abode to give him counsel. When Raghunāth heard of the guru's arrival, he came to the door and bowed his head before his feet. He reverently sprinkled lustral water and brought him into the house and did him worshipful honour in the sixteen ways.<sup>2</sup> Once more he and Sītā clasped his feet and Rāma said with folded lotus hands, 'Though the coming of a master to a servant's house is a source of joy and a foe to sorrow, yet were it more fitting, lord, and customary that you should graciously send for your servant at need. But in that my lord has laid aside his right as lord and done me this loving favour, this house today is sanctified. Now command me, holy saint, and I will do your bidding, for it is a servant's joy to do his master service.'

[D. 9.] When he heard Raghubar's affectionate words, the sage praised him and said, 'It is natural for you to speak thus, O Rāma, who are the jewel of the Solar race'. [C. 10.] After praising Rāma's virtue and generous nature, the royal sage continued in a

<sup>1</sup> The turtle lays her eggs in the sand and herself remains in the water.

<sup>2</sup> The sixteen ways of showing honour to a guest include all sorts of offerings—water, perfumes, raiment, incense, *pān*, etc., and ceremonial circumambulation and lustration.

state of great emotion, 'The king has made all ready for your installation. He purposed to hand over to you the regency. To-day, Rāma, devote yourself to ascetic practices, that God may bring the matter to good effect.' Having thus instructed him, the *guru* returned to the king, but in Rāma's heart was nothing but dismay. 'All we brothers,' he thought, 'were born together, we have eaten together, slept together and together played our boyish games; together we had our ears pierced, were invested with the sacred thread and married—all these ceremonies we have enjoyed at one and the same time. This is one blot on a spotless race that only the eldest should be installed, and not his brothers too.'

(May the Lord's gracious and loving regrets remove all unworthy thoughts from the minds of his votaries.)

[D. 10.] At that moment came Lakṣman, beside himself with love and delight, and the moon of the lily race of Raghu honoured him with affectionate words.

[C. 11.] All manner of instruments sounded, and the rejoicing in the city was beyond description. All prayed for Bharat's coming, that soon he might return to gladden his eyes with the sight. In market, street, house, lane and meeting-place men and women were saying to one another, 'How long to that happy, auspicious moment of the morrow when God will satisfy our yearning and Rāma will sit on the golden throne with Sitā beside him, and so our desire will be fulfilled?' Everyone was saying, 'When will tomorrow come?'

But the designing gods were plotting means of hindrance. The joyous celebrations at Avadh pleased them no more than a moonlight night delights a thief. The gods called on Sarasvati and, falling at her feet, clasped them again and again and made their petition: [D. 11.] 'Mother, regard our sore distress! Bring it about this day that Rāma may leave the kingdom and depart to the forest, and so the purpose of the gods may be accomplished!'

[C. 12.] When she heard the gods' petition, she stood and grieved, thinking, 'I am a winter's night to a lotus bed!' Whereupon the gods again made request and said, 'Mother, the blame will be in no way yours, for Raghu-rāj knows no sorrow and no joy. You know Rāma's mighty power. It is only the souls of creatures bound by fate that have their share of pain and pleasure. Go, then, to Avadh on the gods' behalf.' Again and again they clasped her feet till for very shame she went, thinking, 'Base are the thoughts of the gods! High is their dwelling but low their deeds! They cannot

bear to look on another's power !' Then, contemplating the deed that would be done, causing skilled poets to seek her favour,<sup>1</sup> she went contentedly to Daśarath's city like a star of evil influence, intolerable, bringing woe.

[D. 12.] Now Kaikeyī had a wicked handmaid, whose name was Mantharā; her mind Sarasvati perverted and filled with a store of infamy, and then departed. [C. 13.] Mantharā perceived that the city was decorated and heard the loud sweet strains of festive music. She inquired of the people what was the glad occasion, and when she heard of Rāma's investiture, her soul was consumed with jealousy. She took thought, that evil-minded girl of low degree, how that very night the plan might be made of none effect, like a crafty Kirātin who spies a hanging honeycomb and lies in wait, scheming to steal it. She went sobbing to Bharat's mother. 'Why so sad ?' asked the queen with a smile. She made no reply but only sighed and, as a woman will, shed floods of tears.

'You're a very cheeky girl,' said the queen with a laugh, 'and I imagine Laksman has been teaching you a lesson !' But even then the iniquitous handmaid uttered not a word, but heaved a deep sigh like the hiss of a poisonous serpent.

[D. 13.] The queen said anxiously, 'Why don't you speak ? Is all well with Rāma and the king and Laksman, Bharat and Śatrughna ?' Her words were a torment to the humpback's heart. [C. 14.] 'Mother,' she said, 'why should anyone teach me a lesson, and who is there to stand by me if I am impudent ? Who should be well and happy today but Rāma, seeing that the king is making him regent ? God has been very gracious to Kausalyā, and the result is that her heart is bursting with pride. Why don't you go and see for yourself all the splendid preparations, the sight of which has plunged me into despair ? You care not that your son is in a far land; you imagine that you can influence the king. Sleep and a quilted bed are all you care for, and you are blind to the craft and deceit of the king.'

When the queen heard her loyal words, thinking her mind to be beclouded, she answered threateningly, 'Be silent ! If ever you say such things again, you mischief-maker, I'll have your tongue taken and torn out by the roots !' [D. 14.] The one-eyed, the lame and the humpbacked are known to be crooked and vicious, especially when they are women, and more especially when they

<sup>1</sup> Sarasvati being the goddess of speech, poets would worship her and ask her help in reciting the story of Rāma's victory over Rāvan.

are servants!' So saying, Bharat's mother smiled. [C. 15.] 'Your words are loyal,' she added, 'and I have but warned you. You must not dream that I am angry with you. Happy and blessed will that day be on which your news is proved to be true. The elder brother is the master and the younger the servant—this is the salutary rule in the Solar race. If Rāma is really to be installed as regent tomorrow, I will give you, my girl, whatever you ask, whatever your soul desires. All we mothers are as dear to Rāma as Kausalyā—such is his nature; and he bears a special affection towards me—I have tried and proved his love. If I am born again, may God of his mercy grant that Rāma be my son and Sītā his bride. I love Rāma more than my own life; why should the news of his enthronement sadden you? [D. 15.] I adjure you, by Bharat, speak the truth without guile or reserve; tell me why you are disturbed at this season of rejoicing.'

[C. 16.] 'I have spoken once,' said Mantharā, 'and I am satisfied; yet now I'll get me a second tongue and say somewhat. My miserable head deserves to be broken, for I have hurt you by my well-meant words. You love those who make the false seem true, mother, while I am bitter to your taste. Then I too will only say what pleases you or else hold my peace day and night. God has deformed me and made me a slave; I must reap as I have sown, receive as I have given! What does it matter to me who is king? Shall I cease to be a servant now and become a queen? It is only my folly that I cannot bear to see you dishonoured, and that is why I ventured to say somewhat. Pardon me, mistress, I have made a great mistake.'

[D. 16.] When she heard these subtle words, cloaked in affection, the queen, weak-minded woman as she was and influenced by divine delusion, thought her enemy to be her friend and trusted her. [C. 17.] Again and again she kindly questioned her, like a doe enchanted by the Šavari's song; her reason went astray, as destiny would have it, and the handmaid rejoiced at the success of her cunning scheme. 'You ask, but I fear to speak, for you have called me mischief-maker.' Thus spoke the Saturn<sup>1</sup> of Avadh, beguiling the queen with all manner of smooth words to win her trust. 'O queen, you said that Sītā and Rāma were dear to you, and that you were dear to Rāma; and what you say is true, or was

<sup>1</sup> *sārhasāti*: a name for the planet *śani*, Saturn, so called because its influence is considered to be malignant for seven and a half years of its period of revolution.

true once; but now those days are past and gone. When times change, friends become enemies. The sun fosters the lotus, but if the lotus has no water, that same sun burns it to ashes. Your rival desires to pluck you up by the root, so fence your garden round about with the stout hedge of a scheme. [D. 17.] You feel no concern because you rely on your lord's affection. You fancy that the king is under your influence; he speaks you fair, but his heart is evil and you are simple-minded. [C. 18.] Rāma's mother is cunning and deep; she has found her opportunity and furthered her own purpose. The king has sent Bharat to visit his grandmother, and it was at the suggestion of Rāma's mother, you may be sure! She thinks, "All the other queens do me kindly service, but Bharat's mother is proud, relying on her lord." You, lady, are a thorn in Kausalyā's side, but she is too skilled in deceit to make it known. The king has a special affection for you and, as is natural for a rival queen, she cannot bear to see it. She has schemed to win the king to her purpose and has caused him to fix an auspicious day for Rāma's investiture. Rāma's installation is meet for this line; all approve it, and I too think it good. But when I consider what will happen thereafter, I am afraid. God grant the consequences may rather fall on her!'

[D. 18.] A myriad falsities she invented to convince her of the queen's deceit; a hundred tales she told of rival wives that her resentment might increase.

[C. 19.] Under the influence of fate the queen at last became convinced and, binding her by oath, put further questions. 'What do you ask?' said Mantharā. 'Do you not yet understand? Why, even brute beasts know what is good for them or ill! For a fortnight now all has been preparing; only today have you heard the news from me. In your kingdom am I fed and clothed; therefore if I speak the truth, it is no fault of mine. If I invent and speak aught untrue, God will punish me! If Rāma be invested with the regency tomorrow, God will have sown for you a seed of woe. I draw this line, lady, and swear upon my oath that you will be no more than a fly in the milk!<sup>1</sup> If you and your son do humble service, you may remain in the house—there is no other way!

[D. 19.] As Kadrū troubled Vinatā, so will Kausalyā trouble you. Bharat will lie for ever in prison, and Lakṣman will be Rāma's vicegerent.'

<sup>1</sup> i.e., only fit to be taken out and thrown away.

[C. 20.] When Kaikeyī heard Mantharā's bitter words, she could say naught but grew faint with fear. Bedewed with sweat, she trembled like a plantain tree, and the humpback checked her tongue. With a myriad crafty stories she exhorted the queen to take courage. Kaikeyī's fate was perverse; the wicked girl had won her love, and she praised a crane and took it for a swan.

'Listen, Mantharā,' she said; 'what you say is true; my right eye is continually twitching, and every night I have bad dreams, which I have been stupid enough not to tell you. What am I to do, my friend? My nature is so simple, I know not right from left. [D. 20.] Never to this day, as far as in me lay, have I done anyone unkindness. For what ill deed has fate so suddenly laid upon me this intolerable woe? [C. 21.] Rather would I go to my father's house and live out my life there than live in the service of my rival; for one whom fate binds living to the service of an enemy death were better far than life!'

This and much else said the queen in her wretchedness, and when the humpback heard her, she practised all a woman's wiles. 'Why speak like that,' she said, 'and feel so miserable? Your wedded happiness shall yet grow daily greater, and she who has planned your dishonour shall reap the fruit herself when it is ripe. Ever since I heard these evil tidings, mistress, I have neither taken food by day nor slept at night. I consulted the astrologers and they made their calculations<sup>1</sup> and foretold that Bharat would of a surety be king. But I will show you a way, mistress, if only you will act on it. The king will have to do what you bid him!'

[D. 21.] 'I can throw myself down a well at your bidding,' said the queen, 'or even leave my son and my husband. When the sight of my utter misery leads you to speak, shall I not act to save myself?'

[G. 22.] Now that the humpback had brought Kaikeyī to the slaughter, she whetted the knife of deceit on the whetstone of her heart, and the queen no more guessed her approaching doom than the beast marked down for sacrifice that crops the green grass. Mantharā's words were sweet to the ear but dreadful in their consequence, as though she were offering a draught of honey mingled with poison. 'Mistress,' said the handmaid, 'do you or do you not remember a tale you once told me? There are two boons that the king still owes you;<sup>2</sup> ask them today and satisfy

<sup>1</sup> *rekha khāñcī*: or 'positively'.

<sup>2</sup> See App., s.v. Kaikeyī.

your soul—the kingdom for your son and for Rāma exile to the forest. Thus shall you enjoy all the triumph that was your rival's. But only claim your boons when the king swears by Rāma, that his promise be not broken. If this night pass, you will fail in your purpose; put your whole trust in my plan.'

[D. 22.] Plotting her villainous scheme, the wicked girl continued, 'Go to the boudoir<sup>1</sup> and make your preparations very carefully; and do not too readily put faith in the king.'

[C. 23.] The queen believed the humpback to be her most loyal friend and again and again praised her cleverness. 'I have found no friend in the world like you,' she said; 'I was being swept away and you have lent me your support. If God fulfils my desire tomorrow, then, dear girl, I shall cherish you as the apple of my eye.' Thus Kaikeyi addressed her handmaid in the kindest terms and went to her boudoir.

Disaster was the seed, the handmaid the rains and Kaikeyi's perverted mind the soil; watered by deceit, the seedling sprouted; the two boons were its leaves, and at the last its fruit was misery. She made all preparation for her display of wrath and went to sleep. Queen though she was, she ruined herself by her own evil counsel.

But in the king's palace and the city were sounds of rejoicing, for none knew of these evil designs. [D. 23.] All the men and women of the city were joyously making festive preparations, and the king's court was thronged, some going in and some coming out.

[G. 24.] A number of Rāma's boy companions, delighted at the news, went to him together, and the Lord received them kindly in response to their affection and gently asked them how they fared. Dismissed by their dear comrade, they returned to their homes, speaking to each other in Rāma's praise and saying, 'Who in the world is like Raghubir, who treats us with such kindness and affection? In whatsoever wombs fate wills our birth, God grant that Sītā's lord may be our master and we his servants, and that this relation last for evermore!' This was the earnest desire of all in the city, but still the fire of jealousy consumed Kaikeyi's heart. Who is not ruined by evil companionship? Base counsel drives out common sense.

[D. 24.] In the evening the king went happily to Kaikeyi's chamber, as though Love had become incarnate and gone to visit

<sup>1</sup> *kopagriha* or *kopabhavana*: a room to which a lady may retire to sulk. Boudoir is derived from *bouder*, to sulk.

Relentlessness. [C. 25.] When the king heard that the queen was in her boudoir, he hesitated and hung back afraid. He by the might of whose arm the Lord of heaven dwells secure, he whose favour all monarchs craved, was dismayed when he heard that a woman was wroth. Behold the might and majesty of love! He who could endure the strokes of the trident, the thunderbolt and the sword, was slain by the flowery shafts of Rati's lord! Fearfully the king approached his beloved and was sore grieved when he saw her plight. She lay on the ground, clad in old coarse garments, and had thrown off all the adornments of her person. How well her wretched attire matched her wretched thoughts, as though destiny were proclaiming her widowhood!

The king approached her and spoke to her tenderly; 'Why are you wroth, beloved of my soul? [Ch. 1.] Why are you angry, my queen?' He touched her with his hand, but she pushed her lord away and cast on him a cruel look, like an angry serpent whose tongues were her two wishes and whose fangs the boons, looking for a vital spot. But the king, victim of fate, looked on it all as the playfulness of love. [S. 25.] Again and again he exclaimed, 'My queen, so fair of face and bright of eye, with voice melodious as the cuckoo's voice, graceful of gait, tell me why you are so angry. [C. 26.] My dear one, who has done you wrong? Who has two heads,<sup>1</sup> and whom does death desire to claim? Tell me, what pauper should I make a king, what king am I to banish from his realm? Even an immortal can I slay if he be your foe; as for men and women, they are but wretched worms! Fair lady, you know my nature, how my soul seeks your countenance as the partridge seeks the moon. Beloved, my life, my sons and all I possess, my family and my subjects are wholly at your command. Lady, if I say aught to deceive you, a hundred curses fall on Rāma's life! Be of good cheer and ask whatever your soul desires. Deck that lovely form with ornaments. Carefully consider what is fitting and what is unbecoming at this hour, and haste, my beloved, to put off that mean attire!'

[D. 26.] When she heard his promise and thought to herself how binding an oath the king had sworn, the evil queen rose with a smile and put on her adornments, like a Kirātin who spies the deer and sets her snare.

[C. 27.] Then spoke the king again in sweet and tender tones, trembling with love—for he thought her friendly: 'Lady, you have

<sup>1</sup> See note on B. Ch. 3.

your heart's desire; in every house in the city is joyous celebration. Tomorrow I make Rāma regent; so do you, my bright-eyed queen, make festive preparation.'

When she heard this, her cruel heart throbbed fast, as when a ripe boil has been touched. But even such pain she concealed with a smile, like the wife of a thief who weeps not openly.<sup>1</sup> The king did not fathom her guileful cunning, for she had been taught by a mistress in the art of a myriad crooked wiles. Though the monarch was skilled in statecraft, the ways of a woman are like the ocean, unfathomable. Again, she made further show of treacherous affection, and turning her face aside and averting her glance, said with a smile, [D. 27.] 'You say "Ask! Ask!", dear husband, but never is there giving or taking! You said you would grant me two boons, but I doubt if I shall have them granted.'

[C. 28.] 'Now I guess your hidden meaning,' said the king with a smile; 'you are overfond of showing resentment. You have stored up my promise and never asked for its fulfilment, and I—so simple is my nature—forgot all about it. Do not charge me with a lie; nay, ask for four boons instead of two! It has ever been a rule in the house of Raghu to die rather than break a promise. No quantity of sins can equal a lie; can a myriad seeds make a mountain? Truth is the root of all fair deeds; this is proclaimed in Veda and Purāna, and Manu has declared it. Moreover, I have sworn by Rāma, and Raghurāi is matchless in goodness and love.'

Having thus firmly bound him by his oath, the wicked queen smiled and spoke, revealing her foul design as one looses the bandage from the eyes of a cruel hawk. [D. 28.] A fair forest was the king's desire, and in it joy like a flock of happy birds; and there, like a Bhil huntress, she was about to loose the fearful falcon of her speech.

[C. 29.] 'Hearken, O lord of my life; grant me one boon my soul desires; install Bharat as regent. And this is the second boon I crave with folded hands—fulfil, lord, my desire. Let Rāma dwell in the forest for fourteen years, a perfect anchorite clad in ascetic garb.'

When he heard these gently spoken words, the king's heart was grieved as the *cakavā* is distressed by the touch of the moon's rays. So dismayed was he that he could utter no word, like a quail when the hawk swoops on it in a wood. The monarch grew as pale as

<sup>1</sup> The meaning is doubtful; probably she fears to expose her husband.

death, like a palm-tree struck by lightning. He laid his hands upon his brow and closed both his eyes and began to grieve as though Grief incarnate were grieving. 'My heart's desire,' he thought, 'had blossomed like the tree of Paradise, but when it would bear fruit, like an elephant she has torn it up by the roots! Kaikeyi has made Avadh desolate and laid the foundation of everlasting woe! [D. 29.] That this should happen at such a time as this! Trust in a woman has been my undoing, as when ignorance ruins an ascetic about to win the fruit of his austerities!'

[C. 30.] Thus did the king inwardly lament, and when she perceived it, the wicked queen was infuriated. 'Is not Bharat your son?' she cried. 'Did you buy me in the slave-market? If my words pierce you like arrows, why did you not think before you spoke? Answer now—yes or no; you're famous in the house of Raghu for keeping your word! You promised to grant me a boon—all right, don't grant it; break your word and be disgraced in the eyes of the world! You were praising truth just now and saying you would grant me the boon, and I suppose you expected me to ask for a little parched gram! When Śivi or Dadhicī or Bali gave their word, they kept their promises even at the cost of life or wealth.' Such were the words Kaikeyi used that stung the king as though she were rubbing salt into a burn.

[D. 30.] The king, upholder of righteousness, took courage and opened his eyes. He beat his head and with a deep sigh exclaimed, 'She has dealt me a fatal blow!' [C. 31.] There she stood before him, consumed with wrath. Her fury was like a naked sword; its hilt was her perverted mind, relentlessness its edge, sharpened on the whetstone that was the humpback. The monarch saw the sword was keen and terrible, and thought, 'Will she really take my life?<sup>1</sup>' Then the king steeled his heart to bear and spoke in humble tones designed to soften her:

'My beloved, what are these evil words that you are uttering, in cowardly wise destroying confidence and love? Bharat and Rāma are my two eyes; I call Śāmkara to witness that I speak the truth! I shall certainly send a messenger early in the morning, and as soon as they hear the news, the two brothers will hasten to come. Then I shall fix an auspicious day and with all due pomp and beat of drum set Bharat on the throne. [D. 31.] Rāma is not anxious to reign, and is devoted to Bharat. I was only

<sup>1</sup> Or, 'she will rob me of my reputation for truth or my life'.

observing the rule of royal succession and considering their difference in age. [C. 32.] I swear a hundred oaths by Rāma and declare in all sincerity that Rāma's mother never said a word to me. True, I have made all these arrangements without asking your advice, and that is why my desires have been frustrated. Now put away your wrath and don festal raiment; in a few days Bharat shall become regent. There was only one matter that grieved me—your second request was not reasonable. Even now the pain of it burns my heart like fire. Was it in wrath you spoke, or jest, or is it really true? Be no more angry, and tell me Rāma's fault. Everyone says that Rāma is the pattern of perfection; why, you yourself were wont to praise and love him; but now that I hear your words, I have some doubt of your sincerity. Can one whose nature pleases even his enemies ever do aught to displease his mother?

[D. 32.] 'Now, my beloved, have done with wrath or jesting; think well before you ask, that I may be happy when I see Bharat installed as regent. [C. 33.] Sooner could a fish live out of water, or a serpent live in misery without its jewel—I speak the simple truth in all sincerity—there is no life for me apart from Rāma. Think well, beloved and prudent queen, my very life depends upon my seeing Rāma!'

At these gentle words the wicked woman was consumed with jealousy, as though oblations of *gāī* had been thrown upon the fire. She said, 'You may try any number of tricks but your schemes won't pass muster with me! Grant my boon, or refuse it and be dishonoured; I don't want any of your circumlocutions! Rāma's a marvel of goodness, you're good and wise too, and Rāma's mother's a good woman—oh yes, I know you all well enough! I'll give Kausalyā a reward to match the good she planned for me, and one she won't forget! [D. 33.] If Rāma goes not to the forest at dawn of day, clad in hermit's garb, it will mean my death and your disgrace, O king, and make no mistake about it!'

[C. 34.] With these words the evil queen got up and stood before him like a river of wrath in flood, a river rising in the hills of sin and filled with fury's waters, a dread sight to see; the two boons its either shore, its current her cruel stubbornness, the spate of the humpback's speech its whirling eddies; overthrowing the king like a tree uprooted, it flowed on down to the ocean of disaster. And now the king perceived that it was really true, and death, disguised as a woman, was threatening him. He clasped her feet

and prayed her to be seated, crying, 'Be not an axe to fell the Solar race! Ask for my head and I will give it you forthwith, but slay me not by parting me from Rāma! Somehow or other keep Rāma here, or you will regret it all the days of your life!'

[D. 34.] But when he realized that this was a sickness that could not be cured, the king beat his head and fell upon the ground; crying in accents of utter misery, 'Rāma! O Rāma! O Raghunāth!'

[C. 35.] The king was in anguish and faint with misery like a tree of Paradise uprooted by an elephant. His throat was parched and he could speak no word, like some unhappy fish that has no water. Then once again Kaikeyī uttered bitter, cruel words, as one who pours poison on a wound: 'If you were going to act thus in the end, whatever made you say, "Ask! Ask!"? Can a man roar with laughter and pout at the same time, O king? Or be niggardly and win a name for liberality? Or be valorous on the field and be careful of his safety? Either break your word or act like a man, don't whine like a weak woman. A man of his word is said to hold life, wife and sons, home, wealth and land as worthless as a blade of grass.'

[D. 35.] Hearing her cutting words, the king replied, 'Say on; it's not your fault; it is my fate that has possessed you like a devil and makes you say these things. [C. 36.] Bharat has no ambition whatever for the throne. Fate has inspired perversity to dwell in your heart. It is but the consequence of all my sins that God has withdrawn his favour at this ill hour. Yet still our beauteous Avadh shall flourish and prosper when Rāma, abode of every virtue, shall hold sway. All his brothers shall be subject to him, and Rāma shall be magnified in the three spheres! Only your guilt and my remorse shall never cease nor be effaced, even by our death. Now do whatever seems good to you; only hide your face and keep out of my sight. With folded hands I beg you, speak not one word to me again as long as I live! O wretched woman, one day at the last you will repent that you are killing a cow to feed a tiger!'<sup>1</sup>

[D. 36.] The king fell to the ground, crying once and again, 'Why are you bringing destruction on our house?' But the

<sup>1</sup> *nahārū*: some interpret as 'hawk', and explain that a hawk no more desires to eat a cow than Bharat desires to supplant Rāma.

treacherous queen answered never a word, like one who on the burning-ground silently calls up the spirits of the dead.<sup>1</sup>

[C. 37.] The king kept repeating 'Rāma, Rāma!', distressed as some luckless bird reft of its wings. He prayed in his heart, 'May the day never dawn, nor anyone go and tell Rama! Rise not, O Sun, great father of the house of Raghu, for the sight of Avadh will pierce your heart with grief!' No greater love than was the king's, no greater cruelty than Kaikeyi's could God bring into being. Dawn found the king still sobbing, but at his gate was the sound of lute and pipe and conch; bards were reciting his glories, singers singing his praises, all piercing the king's ears like arrows. All these sounds of festivity pleased him no more than ornaments a widow who joins her husband on the funeral pyre.

That night no one had slept, for all were excitedly longing to see Rāma. [D. 37.] At the palace door was a throng of servants and ministers, and when they saw the sun had risen, they said, 'Why ever has the lord of Avadh not yet awaked? [C. 38.] The king always wakes in the last watch of the night, and today it seems to us most extraordinary. Go now, Sumantra, go and rouse him, that we may receive his commands and do our work.'

Then Sumantra entered the palace, but when he saw it looking so grim, he feared to advance. Forlorn and fearful it seemed, and he was afraid to look on it; it was as though disaster and despair had made it their home. He asked, but no one answered him; he came to the chamber where were the king and Kaikeyi. 'Long live the king!' he cried, and bowed and took his seat; but when he saw the king's plight, he was horrified. Pale, in an agony of woe, he lay upon the ground like a lotus torn up by the root. The minister was afraid and dared not put a question; but she, full of all evil and empty of all good, thus spoke: [D. 38.] 'The king has not slept all night—God knows why. He has gone on repeating "Rāma, Rāma," till daybreak, but does not disclose the reason. [C. 39.] Fetch Rāma here as soon as possible, and when you come back, ask what has happened.'

Sumantra saw that the king too wished it and went off. He guessed that the queen had planned some wicked scheme. He was so anxious that he could scarcely move. 'What', he thought, 'will the king say to Rāma, now that he has sent for him?'

<sup>1</sup> *jāgatim anahūti masānu*: *śmaśāna jagānd* is to utter spells at the burning-ground to call up the spirits of the dead (*preta-mantra*); but these must be uttered silently if they are to have effect.

However, he took courage and came to the palace gate. Everyone noticed his distress and asked the cause. He reassured them all and entered the room where was the glory of the Solar race. When Rāma saw Sumantra approaching, he greeted him respectfully as he would his father. He looked on Rāma's face and told him the king's will and departed with the light of the house of Raghu. When the people saw Rāma going off with the minister so unceremoniously, they were left in a state of dismay.

[D. 39.] The jewel of the house of Raghu came and saw the king's most wretched plight, like that of an aged elephant when he falls terrified at the sight of a lioness. [C. 40.] His lips were parched and all his limbs afire, like some miserable snake bereft of its jewel. He saw the wrathful Kaikeyi at hand, like Death counting the moments to his end. Rāma's nature was compassionate and gentle; he had never heard of sorrow, and now for the first time beheld it; yet he took courage, as the occasion required, and in sweet tones asked his mother, 'Tell me, mother, the cause of my dear father's woe, that endeavour may be made to remove it.' 'Listen, Rāma,' she replied; 'this is the reason and nothing else; the king loves you very much. He said he would grant me two boons and I have asked for what I want. When he heard my requests, the king's heart was grieved; he cannot rid himself of a diffidence on your account. [D. 40.] The king is in a strait betwixt two; on the one hand his affection for his son; and on the other, his promise. Obey his command, if you can, and so put an end to his dire distress.'

[C. 41.] Calmly she sat and spoke these bitter words. Cruelty herself was moved to hear her. Many a word she shot from her tongue like arrows from a bow, and the king was like a yielding target, as though Relentlessness, incarnate as a bold warrior, were learning archery. She sat there like Heartlessness in human form and told Raghupati the whole story. Rāma, sun of the Solar race, the very treasure-house of bliss, smiled to himself and spoke these blameless words, sweet and gentle, jewels of speech: 'Hear me, my mother; blessed is the son who loves to obey his parents' bidding. Hard to find, mother, in all the world is a son who thus contents his father and mother. [D. 41] It is altogether to my profit that I should go to the forest where I may most easily meet with sages. Herein, moreover, I obey my father's command and follow your advice, my mother. [C. 42.] Bharat, dear to me as my own life, gains the kingdom; God is altogether gracious to

me this day. If for such a purpose as this I go not to the forest, then count me chief of the company of fools! Even such as would turn from the tree of Paradise to tend a castor-oil plant,<sup>1</sup> or refuse ambrosia and ask for poison, would not lose such a chance as this, as you must realize, mother, if you think it over. But, mother, there is one matter that causes me special pain—that I see the king in such deep distress. The affair is so trivial, and my father's grief so great—I cannot believe it, mother. The king is strong-minded and a bottomless ocean of virtue. I must have committed some great sin that the king will not speak to me. I adjure you, tell me truly.'

[D. 42.] The wicked queen twisted Raghubar's perfectly straightforward words to a crooked meaning, just as a leech moves crookedly through the water, though it be smooth. [C. 43.] But seeing that Rāma was ready to obey her, the queen was pleased and said, with a display of hypocritical affection, 'I swear by yourself, I take my oath by Bharat, I know no other cause. There can be no fault in you, my son, who bring such happiness to your mother and father and brothers. All that you say, Rāma, is true; you are always ready to heed your parents' word. I adjure you, then, so advise your father that he incur not disgrace in his old age. He must not bring discredit upon that merit which has brought him such a son as you.'

These fair words in the mouth of the evil queen were like such holy places as Gayā in the realm of Magadha;<sup>2</sup> but to Rāma all his mother's words were pleasing, even as any waters are hallowed when they flow into the Gaṅgā.

[D. 43.] The king recovered from his swoon and turned on his side, with his thoughts on Rāma. The minister told him of Rāma's arrival and humbly bade him be of good cheer.<sup>3</sup> [C. 44.] When the king heard that Rāma had come, he composed himself and opened his eyes. The minister raised him up and set him on a seat, and when the king saw Rāma falling at his feet, he clasped him to his heart in loving anguish, like a snake that has found again the jewel it had lost. The monarch stayed gazing at Rāma with a flood of tears pouring from his eyes. His utterance was checked by overmastering distress as he clasped him to his heart again

<sup>1</sup> aranda: *Ricinus communis* or *Palma christi*.

<sup>2</sup> Gayā is holy, but the land of Magadha is unholy.

<sup>3</sup> binaya samaya sama kīṅha: lit. made petition appropriate to the occasion.

and again; but inwardly the king was beseeching God that Raghunāth might not go to the forest. With thoughts fixed on Maheśa he entreated him, 'Hear my prayer, O thou who art ever gracious! Thou art easy to be entreated and art ready to grant the prayer of the helpless; know me to be thy humble servant and relieve my woe! [D. 44.] Thy inspiring presence dwells in the hearts of all. Guide, then, Rāma's thoughts, that he heed not my promise nor the claims of honour or love, but stay at home. [C. 45.] Though in this world my lot be dishonour and the loss of all fair fame, though my portion be hell and heaven be no more mine, cause me to endure all pain unendurable so only Rāma be not lost to my sight!'

So thought the king but spoke no word, and his soul was shaken like a fig-tree's leaf. When Raghupati perceived that his father was overpowered by love, and thought that his mother was about to speak again, he said in humble and considerate tones, suited to the place and time and occasion, 'Father, I would say somewhat, yet were it presumptuous on my part. Forgive my forwardness—I am but a child! You are grieving for a very trifling matter. No one told me of this at the first, but when I saw my lord, I made inquiry of my mother, and when I heard the whole story, I was well content. [D. 45.] Father, at this season of festivity yield not to grief, constrained by love, but grant me your leave to go!'

So spoke the Lord with a thrill of joyous expectation, and added, [C. 46.] 'Blessed is his life upon this earth whose father is glad when he hears of his doings. The four rewards are within his grasp who loves his parents as he loves his own life. After obeying your command and accomplishing the purpose for which I was born, I shall speedily return; so grant me your permission. I go to take leave of my mother and shall then touch your feet and set out for the forest.'

So saying, Rāma took his departure, but the king was so overpowered by grief that he made no reply. The unwelcome news spread through the city as rapidly as a scorpion's sting fills the whole body with poison. Every man and woman was distressed at the tidings like creepers and trees that shrivel before the forest fire. All who anywhere heard the news beat their heads; deep was their despair; they could not be consoled. [D. 46.] Their faces grew pale and tears poured from their eyes; their hearts could not contain their sorrow. It was as though the army of Pathos had descended on Avadh with beat of drum.

[C. 47.] ‘It was all well planned,’ they cried, ‘but God has brought it all to nought!’, and everywhere people were abusing Kaikeyi: ‘What was this evil woman thinking of that she should thus set fire to a thatched house? With her own hands she tears out her eyes and yet expects to see; she throws away nectar and prefers to taste poison! Wicked woman, cruel-hearted, perverse of mind and luckless! She has become a fire to burn up the bamboo grove of the house of Raghu! Sitting on a branch, she has hewn down the tree, and has brought sorrow to the heart of joy. Rāma was ever as dear to her as life; why has she resolved to work this wickedness? Truly say the poets that a woman’s nature is altogether incomprehensible, unfathomable and inscrutable. One may grasp one’s own shadow, my friend, but the way of a woman passes understanding. [D. 47.] What is there that fire cannot burn, or ocean contain? What deed defies a weak woman’s strength? What is there in the world that death devours not?

[C. 48.] What did God first announce and what has he now proclaimed? What would he show us then and what has he shown us now?’

Some said, ‘The king has not done well to grant the wicked queen her boon without due reflection. His stubborn attitude has brought upon him all this woe; a weak woman has mastered him and robbed him of wisdom and good sense.’ But some there were, prudent men who recognized the obligations of duty, who would not blame the king. They reminded one another of the stories of Śivi, Dadhicī and Hariscandra. Some, too, suggested that Bharat was a party to the plot, but others when they heard it looked sad, while some stopped their ears with their hands and bit their tongues and cried, ‘It is false! If you say that, you will lose all the merit you have won! Rāma is dear to Bharat as his own life! [D. 48.] Sooner may the moon shed fiery sparks, or nectar turn to poison, than Bharat ever dream of doing injury to Rāma!’

[C. 49.] Some blamed the Creator, who had promised nectar and given poison. There was a stir in the city and everyone was anxious. Unbearable anguish consumed all hearts and rejoicing was at an end. The wives of the Brāhmans and the venerable ladies of the family and Kaikeyi’s dearest friends began to remonstrate with her and praise her kindly nature; but their words were like arrows in her heart. ‘You always used to say that not even Bharat was as dear to you as Rāma, and this all the world knows; you were wont to love Rāma; then for what offence do you now

banish him to the forest? You have never been jealous of the rival queens; the whole land knows your love and trust in them. What harm has Kausalyā done you now that you should have hurled this thunderbolt upon the city? [D. 49.] Will Sītā desert her husband? Will Laksman remain at home? Will Bharat enjoy the sovereignty of the realm or the king survive without Rāma? [C. 50.] Ponder this and put away your wrath, nor store up in yourself such misery and guilt. By all means give the regency to Bharat, but why banish Rāma to the woods? Rāma is not ambitious for dominion; he is an upholder of righteousness and cares naught for carnal pleasures. Let Rāma leave the palace and dwell in the *guru's* house; ask the king for some such second boon as this. If you assent not to our suggestion, you will gain nothing by your disagreement. If you have only been jesting, then say so clearly and let us know. Does a son like Rāma deserve banishment to the woods? What will people say to you when they hear of it? Up and quickly do something to avert this misery and guilt! [Ch. 2.] Make some plan to avert this misery and guilt, and save the family! Forcibly restrain Rāma from going to the forest, and make this your first endeavour! As the day without the sun, as the body without life, and as the night without the moon, so is Avadh without its lord. Lady, remember this!

[S. 50.] Thus did her companions admonish her with words pleasant to hear and designed to bring about a happy issue; but she was deaf to their advice, for the wicked humpback had tutored her. [C. 51.] No answer she gave, in a cruel passion of intolerable fury, but looked at them as a hungry tigress looks at the deer; and when they saw that her sickness was beyond remedy, they left her and departed, calling her senseless and wretched. 'Fate has been her ruin, queen though she be! She has acted as none other would act!' Thus lamented the men and women of the city and poured on the evil queen a myriadfold abuse. A fever of anguish consumed them as they heaved deep sighs and said, 'What hope have we of life apart from Rāma?' The people were as agitated by the prospect of this sad parting as fish when the water dries up.

While men and women were thus overwhelmed by utter despair, the holy Lord Rāma went to his mother with cheerful face and fourfold exultation in his heart. He feared no more that the king might detain him. [D. 51.] The soul of Raghubir had been like an elephant newly caught, and sovereignty his fetters; but when

he heard of his banishment to the forest and knew that he was freed, his heart was filled with joy.

[C. 52.] The glory of the house of Raghu folded his hands and gladly bowed his head before his mother's feet. She blessed him and clasped him to her bosom and lavished on him ornaments and raiment. Again and again his mother kissed his face, with tears of love in her eyes and trembling with emotion. Again she took him on her lap and pressed him to her heart, and the milk of love poured from her fair breasts. Her gladness and affection were indescribable, as when a beggar becomes rich as Kuvera. Reverently gazing on his beauteous face, his mother spoke in tender tones: 'Tell me, my son—I adjure you by your mother—what date is set for the joyous festivities that will mark the glad climax to the happiness my merit has won and bring to full fruition the joy of my life [D. 52.]—even that day for which men and women as impatiently yearn as the thirsty cuckoo and his mate long in autumn for Arcturus' rain? [C. 53.] Bathe now at once, I beseech you, dear son, and take some sweet food, such as your soul desires, and after that go to your father, my darling; I, your mother, declare there has been too much delay.'

When he heard his mother's most affectionate words, like blooms from the celestial tree of love, laden with the honey of delight and productive of prosperity, Rāma's soul was not led astray like a bee, but, righteous as he was, he observed the path of righteousness and spoke to his mother most tenderly: 'My father has bestowed on me the sovereignty of the woods, where I shall have many great deeds to do. Grant me cheerfully, mother, your leave to go, that glad omens may attend my journey to the forest; and never fear for me, though you love me so much. All will be well, dear mother, by your favour. [D. 53.] I shall stay for fourteen years in the forest and make good my father's promise, and then return and once more see your feet; so be not melancholy.'

[C. 54.] Raghubar's sweet and modest words pierced his mother's heart like arrows of pain. At the sound of his chilling speech she drooped and faded like the *javasa*<sup>1</sup> at a shower in the season of rain. Words cannot describe the despair in her heart, like that of a deer when she hears the roar of a lion. Her eyes filled with tears and her body shook and trembled, as a fish falls sick when it swallows the scum brought down by the early rains. Then his

<sup>1</sup> A prickly plant or grass on which cattle and camels browse and of which *tatti* are made. Its leaves fall in the rains.

mother composed herself and, gazing on her son's face, said in faltering accents, 'My son, you are as dear to your father as life itself; he ever delights to see the deeds you do. He has fixed an auspicious day for your enthronement; what offence have you committed that he should now have bidden you go to the forest? Tell me the reason, my son. Who has become a fire to consume the Solar race?'

[D. 54.] Reading Rāma's desire in his face, the minister's son told her the reason. When she heard the story, she was struck dumb in a state pitiable beyond telling. [C. 55.] She could neither hold him back nor bid him go; either decision was utter anguish to her heart. 'God's ways', she thought, 'are ever adverse to all; he set out to draw a moon and lo! it turned out Rāhu!'<sup>1</sup> Duty and love both laid siege to her soul; her plight was that of the snake and the musk-rat.<sup>2</sup> 'If I remain firm,' she thought, 'and keep my son here, I shall not have done my duty and shall quarrel with my relatives. But if I bid him go to the forest, great will be my loss.' Thus was the queen in a strait, wondering where her duty lay. At last, reminding herself of a woman's duty to her lord and holding her two sons, Rāma and Bharat, in equal affection, the prudent queen, Rāma's mother, with all the courage at her command addressed him with natural simplicity: 'Assuredly, my son, you have done well; obedience to a father's command is one's highest duty. [D. 55.] He promised you the kingdom and has sent you to the forest; for this I sorrow not at all, but only that Bharat, the king and the people will be sore distressed when you have gone. [C. 56.] If it be only your father's will, my son, then go not, for you should put your mother first; but if both your father and your mother bid you go to the forest, the woods are equal to a hundred Avadhs. The forest gods will be your father, the goddesses your mother, the birds and beasts will attend your lotus feet. It is meet for a king to dwell in the woods in the evening of his life; it is only when I regard your tender youth that I am pained. O glory of the house of Raghu, thrice blest will be the forest, and luckless the Avadh which you leave!'

'But if, my son, I bid you take me with you, your heart will feel some doubt. My son, all love you dearly; you are the vital breath

<sup>1</sup> Commentators suggest that a little addition to the shape of the crescent moon would bring it to the form of Rāhu.

<sup>2</sup> The popular type of a dilemma. It is supposed that if a snake swallows a musk-rat, it will die, and if it disgorges it, it will go blind.

of all that breathe, the life of all that live ! And it is you who say, "Mother, I go to the forest," and I who hear your words and sit and sorrow. [D. 56.] Thus reflecting, I constrain you not to stay, with an excess of misguided love; only, I beseech you, remember I am your mother and forget me not. [C. 57.] May all the gods and Fathers preserve you, my holy son, as the eyelids guard the eyes ! The period of your exile is the water, your friends and relatives the fish, and you compassionate and righteous. Remember this and be sure to come and greet them all before they die. Go, then, in peace to the woods, and my blessing go with you, leaving bereaved your servants and relatives and the whole city. This day the merit all have won by their good deeds is vanished, and adverse fate is nigh in all its terror !'

With many a lamentation she clung to his feet, reckoning herself the most miserable of women. Her heart was on fire with anguish, cruel, unendurable; her cries and moans were indescribable. Rāma raised his mother and clasped her to his breast and once more reassured her with tender words.

[D. 57.] At that moment Sītā heard the news and arose in agitation, and came and did obeisance to her mother-in-law's lotus feet and, bowing her head, sat down. [C. 58.] Rāma's mother gently blessed her; she was distressed to see her delicate daughter as she sat there reflecting with bowed head, Sītā, the quintessence of beauty and wifely devotion. She was thinking, 'The lord of my life would go to the forest; how shall I merit to go with him ? In body and spirit, or only in spirit ? But the acts of God are inscrutable.' With her fair toenails she traced marks upon the ground, while the sweet music of her anklets was, in poetic phrase, making affectionate petition that Sītā's feet would never cast them off.

When she saw Sītā shedding tears from her beauteous eyes, Rāma's mother said, 'Hearken, my son; Sītā is very delicate, and dear to your father and mother and all the household. [D. 58.] Her father is Janak, that mighty monarch, and her father-in-law the sun of the Solar race; her lord is he who is to the Solar race as the moon to the bed of lilies, the treasure-house of virtue and beauty. [C. 59.] Moreover, I have gained a beloved daughter, the perfection of beauty, virtue and loving-kindness. She is the apple of my eye, and I have grown to love her so much that I have centred my very soul in Jānaki. I have tended her like a creeper of Paradise with every loving care, and watered her with the water of affection; and now when she brings forth fruit and

flower, God has withdrawn his favour, and who knows what the end will be? Never yet has Sītā left bed or seat or lap or cradle to set foot upon the hard ground; I have ever watched over her like the herb of life,<sup>1</sup> nor even asked her to trim the wick of the lamp. And this is the Sītā who would accompany you to the forest! What then is your bidding, Raghunāth? How can the partridge that delights in the nectar of the rays of the moon bear to gaze upon the sun?

[D. 59.] ‘Elephants, lions, demons and many other evil creatures haunt the forest; can the precious life-giving herb flourish, my son, in a garden of poisonous shrubs? [C. 60.] God created for the woods Kol and Kirāt girls who know naught of sensual delights; their nature is hard as that of the creeping things that live among the stones, and they find no hardship in the forest; or an ascetic’s wife is fit for the woods, who for the sake of penance has abandoned all carnal pleasures. But how, dear son, will Sītā dwell in the forest, who is frightened at the sight of a monkey in a picture? Can the cygnet that frequents the lovely lotus-beds of the holy lake find fit dwelling in a puddle? Consider this, and then, whatever you bid, so I will advise Jānaki. If Sītā remain at home,’ said his mother, ‘she will be my strong support.’

When Raghubir heard his mother’s affectionate words, steeped, as it were, in the nectar of loving-kindness, [D. 60.] he comforted her with wise and loving words, and then began to warn Jānaki, declaring clearly the pains and pleasures of the forest.

[C. 61.] He hesitated to speak before his mother, but realizing the need of speech, he said, ‘Listen, princess, to my advice, and think no other thoughts than these. If you desire your own good and mine, pay heed to what I say and stay at home. My will is this, that you should serve my mother; it were in every way far better, lady, that you should stay at home. There is no other duty higher than this—to do reverent service to the feet of your husband’s parents. Whenever my mother remembers me and is distraught by loving anxiety, then comfort her, my beauteous wife, with ancient tales and tender words. I speak from the heart and swear it a hundred times, it is but for my mother’s sake, fair lady, that I leave you here. [D. 61.] The reward of submission to the duty which both the *guru* and scripture impose can easily

<sup>1</sup> *jianamūri*, or *samjivānt jarī*: a root which, used as a medicine, is able to bring the dead to life.

be won; Gālava and king Nahusa had to endure all sorts of troubles because they were obstinate.

[C. 62.] 'Hear me, my fair one, my wise one! Right soon shall I honour my father's promise and return. It will not be long before the days have passed. Pay heed, beauteous lady, to my advice. If you are stubborn, wife, because you love me so, you will be sorry in the end. Impenetrable are the woods and very fearful; dreadful the heat and cold, the water and the wind. Prickly grass, thorns and pebbles of all kinds are on the paths, and you will have to walk afoot with no protecting shoes. Your lotus feet are soft and lovely; the road is rough and the hills are very steep. Chasms there are and caverns, rivers, streams and watercourses, impassable and fathomless, dreadful to behold. Bears and tigers, wolves, lions and elephants so howl and roar that at the sound men faint for fear. [D. 62.] The ground will be your bed and bark your garb; your food will be wild bulbs and fruit and roots; nor will you find them always every day, but only in their season.'

[C. 63.] 'There, too, walk demons of the night, who feed on men and take a myriad deceptive forms. Rain falls in torrents on the hills. No tongue can tell the hardships of forest life. In the woods are fearful serpents and ferocious birds and throngs of demons that kidnap men and women. When they think on the dense woods, the boldest are afraid; and you, my fawn-eyed wife, are timorous by nature. You, lady of swan-like gait, are not fit to roam the woods; when people hear of it, they will call me infamous. Can the swan that has been reared in the ambrosial water of the Mānasa lake live in the salt sea? Can the cuckoo that haunts fresh mangroves take delight in a thicket of caper-bushes?<sup>1</sup> Think on these things and stay in the palace, lady fair as the moon; too great are the hardships in the forest! [D. 63.] She who is too proud to pay heed to the advice of her *guru* or her husband, who sincerely wish her well, shall in the end have her fill of remorse, and of a surety her good shall turn to ill.'

[C. 64.] When she heard her husband's kindly, persuasive words, Sītā's bright eyes filled with tears. His chilling advice was a burning pain, such as a cakavi feels when she beholds a moonlight night in autumn. In her distress the princess of Videha could make no reply, thinking her holy and beloved lord wished to abandon

<sup>1</sup> karila: *Capparis aphylla*, thorny, leafless caper-bush, growing in the desert and eaten by camels.

When she heard Sītā's words, her mother-in-law was so deeply moved that I cannot describe her plight. Again and again she pressed her to her bosom, then calmed herself and gave her good advice and blessed her: 'May your wedded life be happy and endure as long as the waters of Gaṅgā and Yamunā preserve their course!' [D. 69.] Thus her lord's mother gave Sītā her richest blessing and good counsel, and Sītā bowed her head again and again before her lotus feet with the utmost affection and departed.

[C. 70.] When Laksman heard the news, he jumped up in agitation and ran with melancholy mien and tears in his eyes, all trembling with emotion, and clasped Rāma's feet, distraught with love. Naught could he say, but stood and stared at him like some wretched fish drawn from the water. He was thinking to himself, 'O God, what is going to happen? Is all my happiness at an end, with all the merit I have won? What will Raghunāth tell me to do? Will he make me stay at home or will he take me with him?' Rāma saw his brother standing there with folded hands, renouncing life and home and all, and, tactful as he was, an ocean of kindness and love and simple joy, addressed him thus:

'Brother, be not afraid because you love me so; be well assured that all will end happily. [D. 70.] Those who willingly accept the advice of their mother or father or *guru* or lord have achieved their life's purpose; else is their birth into the world of no avail. Remember this, my brother, and heed my counsel; [C. 71.] do service to the feet of your father and mother. Bharat and Satrughna are away from home, and the king is old and sorrowing for me. I go to the forest, and if I took you with me, Avadh would be left quite desolate, and *guru*, father, mother, subjects and kinsfolk would all have to bear the burden of intolerable pain. Stay, then, and be a comfort to them all; any other course, dear brother, would be very wrong, for that king in whose realm the subjects he loves are sad assuredly merits hell. Stay then, my brother, and regard this as your duty.'

When Laksman heard this, he was much distressed; at the sound of these chilling words he became like a lotus shrivelled by the touch of the frost. [D. 71.] Overpowered by love, he could make no answer, but only clasped his feet in agony of mind. 'Lord,' he said, 'I am your slave and you my master; if you desert me, what can I do?' [C. 72.] Master, you have given me good advice, but I cannot take it, for I am a coward. Only great men, steadfast upholders of the right, are able to follow the moral precepts of the

scriptures, but I am a mere child, nurtured in my lord's affection. Can a swan support Mount Mandara or Mount Meru? I know no *guru*, father or mother save yourself—believe me, Lord, I speak in all sincerity! All the love in the world, all claims of kinship, all affection and confidence of which the Vedas themselves have spoken, all these that are mine are centred in yourself alone, O master, friend of the lowly who know the secrets of all hearts. Teach the precepts of religion to one who aims at glory, dominion and high estate; but should he be abandoned, O ocean of grace, who is devoted in thought and word and deed to your feet?

[D. 72.] In response to his dear brother's gentle and humble speech the merciful Lord took him to his bosom and thus advised him, because he knew his fears were caused by love:

[C. 73.] 'Go, brother, and take leave of your mother, then come back at once and accompany me to the forest.'

Lakṣman was delighted at Raghubar's decision; he had gained his end and feared no more to fail. With glad heart he went to his mother, feeling like a blind man who has recovered his sight. He bowed his head before his mother's feet, but his heart was with Raghunandan and Jānaki. His mother saw that he was troubled and asked him the reason, whereupon Lakṣman told her the whole story. When she heard the unwelcome news, she trembled with fear like a deer that sees the forest on fire all around her. Lakṣman imagined that now his hopes were vain and that affection would constrain her to render them fruitless. In fear and trembling he asked her leave to go, thinking, 'O God, will she bid me go or not?'

[D. 73.] Calling to mind the beauty and loving-kindness of Rāma and Sītā, and considering the king's love for them, Sumitrā beat her head and cried, 'It is that wicked woman who has spread this evil snare!' [C. 74.] But perceiving that this was no time for grief, she calmed herself and with her natural kindness of heart said gently, 'My son, the princess of Videha is your mother, and Rāma your father who loves you most dearly; and there is Avadh wherever Rāma dwells; wherever is sunlight there is day. If Sītā and Rāma go to the woods, there is no reason why you should stay at Avadh; *guru*, father, mother, brother, god and master—all these should be cherished as one's own life. Rāma, too, is the beloved of all that breathe, the life of all that live, the selfless friend of all. If any are worthy of reverence and great affection, it is only because of their association with Rāma. So thinking, go with

him to the forest and thus, my son, fulfil the purpose of your birth into this world.

[D. 74.] 'Thrice blest are you—and I too, I declare it—if your soul in all sincerity has made its home at Rāma's feet! [G. 75.] Only that woman is a mother in this world whose son is Raghupati's votary; else were she better barren. Her breeding is in vain if she imagine she can profit from a son who loves not Rāma. It is your good fortune that Rāma goes to the forest, and that, my son, is the only reason; this is the highest reward for all good deeds, simple devotion to the feet of Rāma and Sītā. Never for one moment yield to lust or wrath or envy, pride or folly; avoid all such disorders and do them service in thought and word and deed. For you the woods will be a home of pure delight, for Sītā and Rāma will be with you as a mother and a father. Take care, my son, that Rāma suffer no trouble in the forest—this is my behest.

[Ch. 3.] 'Yes, this is my behest, my son; see to it that Rāma and Sītā are happy and lose remembrance in the forest of father, mother, friends and relatives and the enjoyments of the city.'

Thus she advised the Lord, and once more blessed him and gave him leave to go, saying, 'May your devotion to the feet of Sītā and Raghubir be constant, selfless and never-wearying!'

[S. 75.] Lakṣman bowed his head before his mother's feet and departed with all speed, anxious at heart as a deer that flees apace, having by good fortune broken through a fatal snare. [C. 76.] He went to Jānaki's lord, happy to be with his dear brother. He did obeisance to the beauteous feet of Rāma and Sītā and accompanied them to the palace of the king. The men and women of the city were saying to one another, 'How God has marred the plan he made so fair at the beginning!' They were wasted and sad and melancholy of face, flustered like bees robbed of their honey. They wrung their hands and beat their heads and sorrowed, distressed like birds that have lost their wings. A huge crowd gathered in the king's court; the depth of their despair it is impossible to describe.

The minister raised the king and seated him, with the welcome news that Rāma had arrived. When he saw Sītā and his two sons, the monarch was profoundly moved. D. 76.] He was troubled as he gazed and gazed at Sītā and his two handsome sons, and again and again affectionately clasped them to his bosom. [C. 77.] The monarch was so moved that he could not speak; a burning pain, born of grief, consumed his breast. Raghubir bowed his

head before his feet with the utmost devotion, then rose and asked his permission to depart: 'Father, give me your blessing and grant me leave to go. Why do you grieve at this hour of rejoicing? Dear father, if you allow your affection to override your duty, you will but lose your good name in the world and incur reproach.'

At this the monarch, still under the influence of love, arose and, grasping Raghupati by the arm, drew him to a seat and said, 'Hearken, my son; sages say of you that Rāma is the Lord of all creation. God apportions fruit in exact accordance with actions, good or bad; as a man acts, so is he rewarded. That is the Vedic principle and all declare it. [D. 77.] But now one commits the crime and another suffers the penalty; very mysterious are the ways of the Blessed Lord. Who in the world can fathom them?' [C. 78.] Then did the king most earnestly try every means to keep Rāma at home; but when he saw from Rāma's face that it was plain the wise and resolute upholder of the right would not remain, the king clasped Sītā to his heart and with great affection cautioned her in every possible way. He told her of the unendurable hardships of forest life and reminded her of the comforts of life with her own father and Rāma's parents. But Sītā's soul was devoted to the feet of Rāma; home pleased her not, nor did the forest frighten her. All the rest then warned Sītā with tales of the manifold troubles to be encountered in the woods. The minister's wife and the prudent wife of the *guru* lovingly and tenderly said, 'It was not you whom the king banished to the forest; do what your lord's parents and the *guru* advise.'

[D. 78.] But Sītā would have none of this cautious advice, well-meant and soft and gentle though it was; she was only troubled by it, like the *cakavī* when touched by the light of the autumn moon.

[C. 79.] She was embarrassed and made no reply.

But when Kaikeyī heard it, she got up in a rage, and bringing hermit's dress and gear and vessels, she placed them before Rāma and said persuasively, 'Raghubir, you are dear to the king as life itself, nor has he the strength of mind to control his loving nature. Perish merit, fair fame and his hopes of heaven, but he will never bid you go to the forest. Remember this and do what you think right.'

Rāma was pleased when he heard the queen's advice, but her words pierced the king like arrows. 'Not even now,' he thought, 'does my miserable life take flight!' The people were dismayed and the monarch fell down in a faint; nobody knew what to do.

Rāma at once donned the anchorite garb, bowed to his father and mother and went forth. [D. 79.] Gathering together all that was needful for the forest, the Lord did obeisance to the Brāhmans and the *guru's* feet and went forth with his wife and brother, leaving all dispirited. [C. 80.] He passed out and stood at Vasiṣṭha's door and saw that the people were consumed with anguish at his departure. Raghubīr consoled them all with words of affection, and then sent for all the Brāhmans. He instructed the *guru* to grant them a year's provision and won their hearts by his courtesy, liberality and modest mien. He satisfied the beggars with gifts and honours and comforted his friends with sincere affection. Next, he summoned the handmaids and men-servants and entrusted them to the *guru*, saying with folded hands, 'Have them in your care, O holy saint, and be to them a father and mother.' Again and again Rāma folded his hands and addressed them all in gentle tones: 'He is my truest friend who endeavours to make the king happy. [D. 80.] O all ye people of the city, take thought so to act that the queens grieve not overmuch at my absence.'

[C. 81.] Thus did Rāma exhort them all and joyously bowed his head before his *guru's* lotus feet; then with a prayer to Ganapati, Gaurī and Giriśa Raghuṇāt set forth with their blessing. Great was their despondency when Rāma went forth; the cries of lamentation in the city were terrible to hear. In Lankā there were evil omens and in Avadh sorrowing; and in heaven mingled joy and despair.

The king recovered from his swoon, and waking to life, sent for Sumantra and thus addressed him: 'Rāma has gone to the forest and I still live; what have I to look for that breath still lingers in my body? What more grievous pain than this can my soul endure to compel it to quit my body?' Then the monarch composed himself and said, [D. 81.] 'Take a chariot, my friend, and go you with them. Very delicate are the two princes, and Janak's daughter, too, is delicate. Set them on the chariot and escort them as far as the forest, and after a few days return. [C. 82.] If the two brothers are determined not to return—for Raghuṇāt is one who will not break his word or violate his oath—then do you make humble petition with folded hands that the Lord may send back the daughter of Mithilā's king. When Sitā is frightened at the sight of the forest, seize your opportunity and tell her my advice: "Your father-in-law and your mother-in-law have sent this message:

'Come back, my daughter; there are many hardships in the forest. Stay sometimes in your father's house and sometimes in the palace of your lord, just as you please.' So try every means to bring her back; if she returns, my life will be preserved; if not, the end of the matter will be my death. There is naught I can do if God withdraw his favour.' So saying, the king fell to the ground in a swoon, crying, 'O bring back Rāma and Laksman and Sītā that I may see them!'

[D. 82.] Having received the king's commands, Sumantra bowed his head and quickly made ready the chariot, and went outside the city where were the two brothers and Sītā. [C. 83.] Then Sumantra made known the king's command and begged Rāma to mount the chariot. The two brothers mounted the chariot with Sītā, and doing mental obeisance to Avadh, set forth.

All the people were distressed to see Rāma set out and Avadh left desolate, and they accompanied him. The gracious Lord used all means to dissuade them; they turned back, but again turned to follow him, constrained by love. Avadh seemed to them as dismal as the dark night of Doom, and all the men and women of the city like frightful beasts; when they looked on one another, they were afraid. Their homes appeared like burning-grounds and their families like ghosts; their sons and friends and intimates like angels of death. In the gardens the trees and creepers withered; streams and lakes were fearful to behold.

[D. 83.] Thousands of horses, elephants, tame deer and cattle, cuckoos and peacocks, koels, *cakuvās*, parrots and *mainās*, cranes, swans and partridges [C. 84.] stood all dismayed by Rāma's departure, just where they were, like painted pictures. The city was like some dense forest full of fruit<sup>1</sup>, and all the men and women in it so many birds and beasts. God had made Kaikeyī a savage Kirātin who had set the whole forest fiercely ablaze. Unable to endure the fire of separation from Raghubar, all the people fled in panic from the city. Everyone thought in his heart, 'Apart from Rāma, Laksman and Sītā there is no happiness. Where Rāma is, is all we need. What can we do in Avadh now Raghubir has gone?' With this fixed idea in their minds, they went with him, leaving such happy homes as even gods might seek in vain. How

<sup>1</sup> *saphala*: the *pīkā* explains that Avadh contained the fruit of *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*, and the people ate them at ease. This seems a forced and inappropriate interpretation. Other editions read *sakala*, the whole (city).

can luxury's delights constrain those who love the lotus feet of Rāma? [D. 84.] So leaving the children and old men at home, all bore him company.

On the first day Raghunāth made his stay on the bank of the river Tamasā. [C. 85.] When Raghupati saw that his subjects were so dominated by their affection, his pitiful heart was sore distressed; for Raghunāth, the holy Lord, is full of compassion and easily touched by the sorrows of others. With loving, gentle and tender words Rāma used every means to dissuade the people; he repeatedly instructed them in their duty, but they loved him so much that they refused to turn back. They would not abandon the love they bore him, and Raghurāī was in a dilemma. At last, overcome by grief and weariness, the people went to sleep, bemused, moreover, by divine delusion. When two watches of the night had passed, Rāma affectionately spoke to his minister: 'Friend, so drive the chariot that the tracks may be confused; there is nothing else to be done.' [D. 85.] Bowing their heads before the feet of Śambhu, Rāma, Lakṣman and Sītā mounted the chariot, and the minister drove it away at speed, confusing the tracks.

[C. 86.] Early in the morning all the people awoke and a great cry arose, 'Raghunāth has gone!' Nowhere could they find the tracks of the chariot; they ran in all directions, crying, 'Rāma! Rāma!' They were as greatly agitated as a number of merchants when their ship has sunk in the ocean. They explained to one another that Rāma had deserted them because he recognized the troubles they were enduring. They reproached themselves and commended the fish:<sup>1</sup> 'A curse on life without Raghubir! If God has separated us from our beloved, why has he not answered our prayer for death?' Thus with many a lamentation they returned to Avadh, full of bitter grief. Unspeakable was the agony of separation; it was only because they looked forward to his return that they cared to go on living.

[D. 86.] Men and women began to practise religious observances and make vows in the hope of seeing Rāma once more, as miserable as the cakarā and his mate or the lotus robbed of the sight of the sun.

[C. 87.] The two brothers with Sītā and the minister arrived at the city of Śrīṅgavera. Rāma alighted when he saw the holy

<sup>1</sup> Because fish die when they are deprived of water, but they still lived though separated from Rāma.

Gangā and fell prostrate in an ecstasy of delight. Laksman, the minister and Sītā also did obeisance, and Rāma shared the joy of all; for Gangā is the source of all pleasure and bliss, the cause of every joy and the end of every pain. A myriad stories and legends Rāma kept repeating as he gazed on Gangā's ripples, and spoke to his minister, his brother and his beloved of the high majesty of the river of the gods. They bathed and felt no more the fatigue of their journey, and gladly refreshed themselves with a draught of the pure water. To say that he was weary, by thinking on whom the burden of all weariness is removed, is but to use a conventional phrase.

[D. 87.] The untainted source of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, the Banner of the Solar race, performs such acts as man performs to be a bridge across the ocean of birth and death.

[C. 88.] When Guha the Niṣāda heard these tidings, he joyfully summoned his friends and kinsfolk, and with panniers laden with gifts of fruit and roots went out to meet them with unutterable delight. He prostrated himself and laid his gifts before them and gazed on the Lord with the utmost devotion. With spontaneous affection Raghurāī inquired after his welfare and seated him beside himself. 'Lord,' he replied, 'all is well with me now that I have seen your lotus feet, and I am to be numbered among the blessed. My land, my wealth, my home, divine Lord, are yours; I and my household are your lowly servants. Be so gracious as to enter my city, and so honour your servant that all may envy me.'

'All that you have said, wise friend,' said Rāma, 'is true; but my father has given me other commands. [D. 88.] For fourteen years I must dwell in the forest, observing anchorite vows, wearing hermit's dress and eating hermit's food. It is not meet for me to stay in the village.' Guha was very sad when he heard this.

[C. 89.] Beholding the beauty of Rāma, Laksman and Sītā, the men and women of the village said with deep emotion, 'Tell me, friend, what sort of parents are these that have sent such mere children to the woods?' But some said, 'The king has done well, for thus God has granted us the desire of our eyes!'

Then the Niṣāda king took thought and chose a pleasant resting-place beneath a *śīśam* tree.<sup>1</sup> He brought Raghunāth and showed him the spot, and Rāma declared it was very charming. The villagers did him reverence and returned to their homes, while

<sup>1</sup> *śīṁsupā* (*śīṁsapā*): *Dalbergia sissoo*, *śīśam*: also, *asoka*.

Raghubar went to perform his evening devotions. Guha spread a couch, soft and beautiful, of grass and fresh leaves, and with his own hand<sup>1</sup> selected the purest, sweetest and most tender fruit and roots and set them before them in leaf-platters.

[D. 89.] The jewel of the house of Raghu partook of the bulbs and roots and fruit with Sītā and the minister and his brother, and then retired to rest while his brother rubbed his feet. [C. 90.] When Lakṣman perceived that the Lord was sleeping, he arose, and kindly bidding the minister sleep, he began to keep vigil, kneeling on one knee a little way away with bow and arrows ready. Guha summoned trustworthy guards and with great devotion stationed them at various posts, while he himself went and sat by Lakṣman with quiver at his side and arrow ready on the bow. When the Niśāda saw the Lord lying there asleep, his heart was troubled, for he loved him so; he trembled with emotion and tears poured from his eyes. Then he affectionately addressed Lakṣman: 'The king's palace is all-glorious, unrivalled by the dwelling of the Lord of heaven, with jewelled roof-chambers as beautiful as though Rati's lord had fashioned them with his own hand; [D. 90.] and there are soft beds, clean and marvellously wrought, luxurious and fragrant with the perfume of flowers; jewelled lamps, too, and all that offers comfort; [C. 91.] with all kinds of coverlets, pillows and mattresses, soft and white and lovely as the froth of milk; on these Sītā and Rāma were wont to sleep at night, humbling with their beauty the pride of Rati and Kāmadeva. And it is this same Sītā and Rāma that sleep there on that couch, tired and uncovered, piteous to behold! He whom his parents and his kinsfolk, his subjects and comrades and kindly handmaids and men-servants would care for as they care for their own lives now lies sleeping on the ground, the holy Lord Rāma; and she whose father is Janak, of world-renowned power, and whose father-in-law is the Raghu monarch, friend of the king of heaven, and whose husband is Rāmacandra—the princess of Videha lies sleeping on the ground! Is there any from whom God has not turned away his face? Should Sītā and Raghubir have been exiled to the forest? True is the saying that fate is paramount!

[D. 91.] 'A cruel and evil deed has the daughter of Kaikeya done, who in a season of gladness has inflicted this pain on Raghunandan and Jānaki! [C. 92.] She has become an axe to fell the tree of

<sup>1</sup> pāñī: or, water. Some read dāñī, brought.

the Solar race; in her perversity she has plunged the whole world into sorrow!' Sad indeed was the Niśāda when he saw Rāma and Sītā sleeping on the ground.

Then spoke Laksman in gentle, tender tones words full of wisdom, detachment and devotion: 'There is none who can bring joy or sorrow to another; for all reap the reward, brother, for the deeds that they themselves have done. Union and separation, the experience of good and ill, friends, enemies and those who are neither—these are but delusive snares; birth, death and all the world's entanglements, prosperity and trouble, fate and destiny, land, home and wealth, city and household, heaven and hell and all the business of this world, all that is seen or heard or imagined, are rooted in delusion; there is no reality in them. [D. 92.] Just as in a dream a king becomes a beggar or a poor man the lord of heaven, yet when they awake there is neither gain nor loss, so should one regard this phenomenal world. [C. 93.] Remember this and be not wroth nor blame any to no purpose; for all are asleep in the night of ignorance, and of many kinds are the dreams that are dreamed. In the night of this world ascetics are awake, men of spiritual vision, detached from unreality. Then only may a soul be recognized as waking in this world when it displays indifference to all sensual delights. When true discernment dawns and delusion and error flee away, then is born devotion to the feet of Raghunāth. This, my friend, is the highest spiritual wisdom, to love the feet of Rāma in word and thought and deed. For Rāma is the Absolute, the highest truth, incomprehensible, invisible, without beginning or equal, unchangeable, indivisible, ever defined by the Veda as "Not thus".

[D. 93.] 'For the sake of his votaries and earth and Brahmans and cows and gods the gracious Lord in human form does such deeds that when one hears of them the snares of the world are burst asunder. [C. 94.] Remember this, my friend, and rid yourself of delusion; be devoted to the feet of Sītā and Raghubir.'

Day broke as they spoke of Rāma's perfections, and he who brings joy and happiness to the world awoke. After observing every purificatory duty, Rāma, the pure and wise, bathed and asked for milk of the banyan, and with his younger brother coiled his hair into a knot on his head. When Sumantra saw it, his eyes filled with tears; a burning pain consumed his heart and his aspect was melancholy as he folded his hands and very humbly said, 'Lord, the king of Kosala spoke thus to me: "Take a chariot and

go with Rāma; escort him to the forest and see that he bathes in Gaṅgā, then at once bring the two brothers back again. Bring back Laksman, Rāma and Sitā, resolving all their doubt and hesitation." [D. 94.] That is what the king said; now I will do whatever my lord commands, I swear it.' With this humble speech he fell at their feet and wept like a child. [C. 95.] 'Dear master,' he went on, 'of your grace so act that Avadh be not left without a lord.'

Rāma raised the minister and thus instructed him: 'Friend, you have examined all the principles of dutiful conduct. Śivi, Dadhici, and king Hariscandra endured countless afflictions for duty's sake; the wise kings Rantideva and Bali suffered much but kept their faith. There is no duty equal to truth—so declare the Vedas, Agamas and Purāṇas. This duty it has been easy for me to fulfil, and to abandon it would mean disgrace in the three spheres. For a man of honour to incur disgrace is a bitter anguish, equal to a myriad deaths. But why say more to you, my friend? It is a sin even to answer you again.'

[D. 95.] 'Clasp my father's feet and say with the humblest salutations and folded hands, "Father, on no account suffer the least anxiety for me."

[C. 96.] 'Moreover, you too wish me well, as does my father; wherefore, friend, with folded hands I beseech you to remember that it is your duty in all ways so to act that my father sorrow not nor be anxious for my welfare.'

When he heard this conversation between Raghunāth and the minister, the Niṣāda and his kinsfolk were distressed. Laksman spoke a little harshly, but Rāma checked him, for he thought it most improper, and with some embarrassment charged the minister not to repeat what Laksman had said. Sumantra then continued the king's message: "Sitā will not be able to endure the hardship of forest life; therefore you and Raghubar should arrange that Sitā may return to Avadh; else shall I be without prop or stay and perish like a fish out of water. [D. 96.] Sitā will find perfect happiness in her father's home or mine, and will live in whichever she may wish until this trouble be ended." [C. 97.] I cannot tell you how piteously and affectionately the king made this request.'

When he heard his father's message, the Lord of grace endeavoured in all possible ways to persuade Sitā to return. 'If you return,' he said, 'my parents, the *guru*, our friends and kinsfolk will all be relieved of anxiety.' But to all her lord's persuasions

the princess of Videha replied, 'Hear me, lord of my life, dearly beloved; my lord is full of compassion and perfect wisdom; can a shadow exist apart from its substance? Where can the sunlight go, divorced from the sun, or where the moonlight, separated from the moon?'

After addressing these modest and loving words to her husband, she spoke to the minister in kindly wise: 'You desire my welfare, as do my father and the father of my lord; it were most improper for me to answer you again. [D. 97.] Yet, friend, my grief compels me to withstand you; take it not ill. Apart from my lord's lotus feet all my kindred are as nothing worth! [C. 98.] I have seen the luxurious splendour of my father's dominion and the crowns of mighty kings bowing at his footstool; yet though my father's house be such a home of bliss, it delights me not a whit if my husband be not with me. My lord's father is the emperor, Kosala's monarch, whose influence extends throughout the fourteen worlds, whom the king of the gods comes forward to greet and seats on the half of his own throne. Such an one have I for a father-in-law, Avadh for my home, a beloved family and a mother-in-law who is to me a mother. Yet in none of these can I dream of finding happiness apart from the dust of Raghupati's lotus feet. Rough roads, the woodlands and the hills, the elephants and the lions, impassable lakes and rivers, Kols and Kirāts and deer and birds—all bring me joy if I be with the lord of my life! [D. 98.] 'Fall, then, at the feet of my lord's parents and entreat them from me not to grieve at all; I am happy in the forest and content. [C. 99.] With me are the lord of my life and his dear brother, most valiant of heroes, bearing bow and quiver. The road will not weary me, nor shall I wander from the path or feel distressed. Be not, then, anxious at all on my account.'

When he heard Sītā's plain refusal, Sumantra was as distressed as a serpent that has lost its jewel. He could neither see nor hear nor utter any word in his extreme agitation. Rāma did all he could to comfort him, but his soul was not satisfied. He put forward every argument to persuade him to allow him to accompany them, but Raghunandan returned fitting answers to all his pleas. The will of Rāma cannot be gainsaid; the ways of fate are hard and no power can annul them. He bowed his head before the feet of Rāma and Laksman and Sītā and turned away like a merchant who has lost his all.

[D. 99.] As he drove off his chariot, the horses kept gazing at Rāma and whinnying; and when he saw it, the Niśāda grieved sore and beat his head and sorrowed. [C. 100.] 'If mere brute beasts,' he cried, 'are so distressed at parting, how will his subjects and his father and mother endure to live ?'

When Rāma had constrained Sumantra to return, he himself went on to the bank of the Gaṅgā. He called for a boat, but the boatman would not bring it. 'I know your hidden power,' he said; 'all say that the dust of your lotus feet is a kind of magic charm for making man. A rock touched it and became a beautiful woman; and wood is no harder than stone ! If my boat becomes a hermit's wife, I shall lose my boat and my livelihood too.<sup>1</sup> By this ferry I support my whole family; I know no other means of living. If, my lord, you really want to cross the river, then bid me wash your lotus feet. [Ch. 4.] When I have washed your lotus feet, my lord, I will take you on board and I want no fee. By yourself and Daśarath I swear, O Rāma, I tell you the whole truth. Lakṣman may shoot me with his arrows, but till I have washed your feet, merciful lord of Tulasi Dās, I will not take you across !'

[S. 100.] When he heard the boatman's words, so rude but so devoted, the merciful Lord looked at Jānakī and Lakṣman and laughed. [C. 101.] Said the Lord of grace with a smile, 'Do so, then, that your boat may not be lost. Bring water quickly and wash my feet, for it is late. After that take me across.'

He by thinking on whose name but once men cross the boundless ocean of birth and death, he, the merciful, who had made the worlds too small for his three strides,<sup>2</sup> made request of a boatman ! Gaṅgā rejoiced when she saw his toenails, though she had been carried away by doubt when she heard the Lord's words.<sup>3</sup> At Rāma's bidding the boatman filled a wooden bowl with water and brought it. In an ecstasy of bliss he began lovingly to wash the lotus feet. All the gods rained down flowers and enviously praised him, crying, 'None is so meritorious as he !' [D. 101.] After washing his feet and drinking of the water, he and all his family,

<sup>1</sup> *bāṭa parai*: or, the ferry will be closed.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to Viṣṇu's incarnation as a dwarf; see App., s.v. Viṣṇu.

<sup>3</sup> The *ṛīkī* explains: Gaṅgā first of all had doubts when she heard Rāma making request of a mere boatman; but when she saw his toenails and recognized her birthplace, she knew him to be her Lord and was glad; she realized that he was only playing the part of a man.

and thus ensuring his Fathers' salvation, he joyfully brought the Lord to the further bank.

[C. 102.] Sītā and Rāma, with Guha and Laksman, disembarked and stood on Gaṅgā's sandy shore. The boatman, too, got out and fell prostrate before them. The Lord was embarrassed that he had given him no reward; so Sītā, who read her husband's mind, readily drew off a jewelled ring. 'Here is your fee,' said the gracious Lord; but the boatman in confusion clasped his feet. 'Lord,' he cried, 'what have I not received this day? The fire of my guilt and woe and poverty has been extinguished! For a long time have I plied for hire, and today God has paid me in full measure. Now, Lord, friend of the poor, of your grace I want for nothing. Whatever you give me when you return I will gratefully accept as my reward.'

[D. 102.] Though the Lord and Laksman and Sītā made every effort to persuade him, the boatman would take nothing. The compassionate Lord bestowed on him the gift of perfect faith and bade him farewell.

[C. 103.] Then the lord of the house of Raghu bathed and bowed his head to Śiva's emblem in adoration; and Sītā addressed Gaṅgā with folded hands: 'Mother, fulfil my desire, that I, with my husband and his brother, may safely return and worship you once more.' Then to Sītā's loving prayer the holy stream made gracious answer: 'Hearken, princess of Videha, beloved of Raghubir! Who in the world knows not your might? Those on whom you look become guardians of the spheres, and all the mystic powers serve you with folded hands. By your so humble prayer you have shed on me your favour and highly exalted me; yet, divine lady, will I give you my blessing that what I say may prove effectual. [D. 103.] You will return in safety to Kosala with your beloved lord and his brother; all your desire will be fulfilled and your fair fame will be noised throughout the world.'

[C. 104.] Hearing Gaṅgā's words that promised such felicity, Sītā rejoiced that the divine river was propitious. Then the Lord bade Guha return home; but when he heard it, he grew pale and there was anguish in his heart. With folded hands Guha humbly said, 'Hear my petition, O jewel of the house of Raghu! I shall stay with my lord and show him the way and for a few days wait upon his feet; and in whatever forest you stay, Raghurāi, I shall fashion a fair hut of leaves; and after that I shall obey whatever command you give me, by Raghubir I swear it!' When he

perceived his heartfelt affection, Rāma took him with him and Guha was overjoyed. Then Guha called together all his kinsfolk and dismissed them with words of consolation.

[D. 104.] Then with his thoughts on Ganapati and Śiva the Lord Raghunāth bowed his head to Gaṅgā, and with his friend, his brother and Sītā he set out for the woods. [C. 105.] That day he stayed beneath a tree, and Laksman and his companion saw to his comfort. At daybreak the Lord Raghurāi performed his morning duties and went on till he saw the sovereign of holy places. Truth is his minister, Faith his beloved wife, and such as Mādhava the friends who cherish him. His treasury is stored with the four rewards and his fair dominion is that holy province. His realm is a fort, impregnable, strong and glorious, such as no foe could ever dream of storming; and all the holy places form his host of stalwart warriors, steadfast in war to crush the armies of sin. The junction of the rivers is his splendid throne, his umbrella the deathless banyan tree that enchantsthe souls of sages. The ripples of Yamunā and Gaṅgā are his royal whisks, the very sight of which bursts the bonds of woe and poverty. [D. 105.] The meritorious, the holy and the pure are his servants, who meet with all that they desire; his bards are the Vedas and Purāṇas that recite the sum of his spotless perfections.

[C. 106.] Who can declare the power of Prayāga, a lion to slay the elephant of accumulated sin? Beholding that glorious lord of holy places, Raghubar, the ocean of joy, rejoiced. With his holy lips he expounded to Sītā, Laksman and his friend the majesty of that great goal of pilgrimage; then reverently greeting it and looking on its groves and gardens, and speaking devoutly of their greatness, he passed on till he saw Trivenī, giver of all good blessings to him who meditates thereon. Gladly he bathed and worshipped Śiva and did reverence, as was due, to the deities of the sacred spot. Next, the Lord came to Bharadvāja, and as he prostrated himself, the sage clasped him to his breast; unspeakable was the joy in the sage's heart; it was as though he had reached the height of celestial bliss.

[D. 106.] The high sage blessed him; and in his heart was joy as he thought that God had brought before his eyes in visible form the fruit of his good deeds. [C. 107.] He asked of his welfare and gave him a seat and made him well content with loving service. The sage brought and offered him bulbs and fruit and shoots, as sweet as though made of ambrosia. With Sītā, Laksman and his

friend Rāma partook of the delicious roots and fruit with much enjoyment. When Rāma was refreshed and all his weariness forgotten, Bharadvāja addressed him in gentle tones: 'Today my penance, my service in this holy place, and my renunciation have met with their reward; so, too, my prayers, austerities and detachment; yea, all my righteous acts have been rewarded, for today, O Rāma, I have looked on you ! There is no higher gain, no greater happiness than this; all my desires have been satisfied by the vision of your person. Now grant me of your grace this boon, a genuine devotion to your lotus feet. [D. 107.] Until a man becomes your servant, unfeignedly, in thought and word and deed, try as he may, no effort of his own can ever bring him happiness.'

[C. 108.] Rāma was embarrassed by the sage's praise, but was filled full of joy at his love and devotion. Then Raghubar extolled before them all in a myriad ways the sage's glorious renown, saying, 'He, O sage, whom you honour is great indeed; in him dwell all perfections!' Thus did the sage and Raghubir exchange their courtesies and enjoyed a happiness too deep for words.

When those who dwelt at Prayāga heard the news, students, ascetics, sages, adepts and anchorites all flocked to Bharadvāja's hermitage to see the glorious sons of Daśarath. Rāma greeted them all; right glad were they to feast their eyes on him; they blessed him in an ecstasy of joy and returned home, praising his beauty.

[D. 108.] Rāma rested there that night, and in the morning bathed at Prayāga; then with Sītā, Laksman and his follower rebowed before the sage and with glad heart prepared to set out.

[C. 109.] Rāma affectionately asked the sage, 'Lord, tell us what road we should take.' The sage smiled to himself and said to Rāma, 'All roads are easy to you.' He summoned his disciples that they might accompany him, and at the summons some fifty came in joyful expectation. All were possessed with boundless love for Rāma, and all declared they knew the road. Then the sage chose four students to go with him, who had won much merit in the course of many lives. Raghuरāj did reverence to the seer, and with his permission went joyously on his way. When they passed by the village, men and women ran out to see them; they had found a lord and the fruition of their lives. Sadly they turned home, but sent their hearts to bear him company.

[D. 109.] Rāma kindly dismissed the students, who returned with their hearts' desire fulfilled. Then he stopped to bathe in Yamunā's stream, dark as his own body.

[C. 110.] When those who dwelt upon the river bank heard of their arrival, they came running, men and women, forsaking their various occupations; and when they beheld the beauty of Laksman, Rāma and Sītā, they extolled their own good fortune. They hesitated to ask their names and where they lived, though much they longed to do so, but those of them who were older and more experienced were able to guess who Rāma was. They told the whole story to the rest, how that he had come to the forest at his father's bidding; and when they heard it, all were sad and sorrowed, saying that the king and queen had done an ill thing.

<sup>1</sup> [At that moment there came an ascetic, young, handsome and gloriously bright, of a nature unknown to poets, in anchorite guise, devoted to Rāma in thought and word and deed. [D. 110.] With streaming eyes and trembling with emotion he recognized his own adored divinity and fell prostrate to the ground in a state of inexpressible rapture. [C. 111.] In an ecstasy of affection Rāma clasped him to his heart, feeling like a destitute beggar who has found the philosopher's stone; and everyone said it was as though Love and Truth incarnate were embracing. Next, he touched the feet of Laksman, who raised him with the utmost devotion. Then he placed upon his head the dust of Sītā's feet, who gave him her blessing as a mother blesses her child. The Niśāda prostrated himself before him, and the anchorite gladly embraced him as Rāma's devoted friend. He quaffed the nectar of Rāma's beauty from the cup of his eyes, as happy as a hungry man who has found delicious food.]

<sup>1</sup> The bracketed passage, recording the appearance of the unnamed ascetic, is awkwardly introduced and is thought by some to be an interpolation; but it is found in the best MSS. and was probably written by Tulasi Dās. The episode has given rise to various wild conjectures; the ascetic has, for example, been identified with Agni or Hanumān. Our *pīkā*, after giving as an alternative rendering of *kavi alakhit gati* 'one who was a poet who wished to remain unidentified', adds the following note:—'Some commentators regard this passage as an interpolation, and some view it as inappropriate and clumsily introduced; but it does occur in all the ancient MSS. Tulasi Dās was a man of extraordinary spiritual experience. No one can tell what he had in mind when he inserted this episode at this point, but it is certainly not an interpolation. When he speaks of the ascetic as *kavi alakhit gati*, it is impossible to be certain what he means; but in my opinion the ascetic was either Hanumān or Tulasi Dās himself experiencing a mystic vision.' This last theory, whether sound or not, is attractive; legend relates that the poet did meet the brothers in their guise as hunters.

Men and women gazed on the beauty of Rāma, Laksman and Sītā, and love rendered them anxious for their safety. 'Tell me, friend,' they cried, 'what sort of a father and mother are these who have sent such mere children to the forest ?'

[D. 111.] Then Raghubir earnestly desired his friend to return home, and in obedience to Rāma's command he went his way.

[C. 112.] With folded hands Sītā, Rāma and Laksman bade a reverent farewell to Yamunā, and the two brothers joyously resumed their journey with Sītā, dwelling on the greatness of the daughter of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Many travellers met them as they walked along the road, and when they saw the two brothers affectionately exclaimed, 'You bear all the marks of royalty and we are troubled indeed to see you, for you are travelling the road on foot! It seems to us that astrology is no true science. This is a difficult road, with hills and dense forests; moreover, you have with you a delicate lady. There are elephants, too, and lions, and the woods are fearful to behold. We will go with you, if it be your will; we will escort you as far as you are going, then bow to you and return.'

[D. 112.] Thus did their love constrain them to make this request, trembling with emotion and with tears in their eyes; but the gracious Lord gently and courteously sent them away.

[C. 113.] All the towns and villages that lay on their way were the envy of the cities of the serpents and the gods. 'What pious men founded them and in what auspicious hour? Blessed are they and holy and highly to be praised!' With any spot the feet of Rāma trod the Paradise of Indra would not compare. Great stores of merit did they earn who dwelt beside their road; and those who had their home in heaven extolled them, for that they feasted their eyes on Rāma, dark as a cloud, together with Sītā and Laksman. The lakes and rivers of the gods lauded those lakes and rivers in which Rāma bathed. The tree of Paradise gave glory to the tree in whose shade Rāma rested, and when earth touched the dust of Rāma's lotus feet, she deemed her blessedness fulfilled. [D. 113.] The clouds gave him their shade, and the gods rained down flowers and enviously extolled them. Thus looking at the hills and woods and birds and beasts, Rāma went on his way.

[C. 114.] Whenever Raghurāi passed by a village with Sītā and Laksman then, when they heard of their coming, young and old,

<sup>1</sup> Yamunā.

men and women, all forsook their household duties and came running out to see them; and when they beheld the graceful forms of Rāma, Laksman and Sītā, their eyes were gladdened and they were happy. Their eyes filled with tears and they felt a thrill of joy; all were enchanted when they saw the two heroes. Their blissful state no tongue can describe; they were like beggars when they find a heap of heavenly jewels. Each one called another and bade him feast his eyes then and there on that most blessed sight. Some, when they saw Rāma, would accompany him on the way, gazing on him with eyes of love; others would draw his beauty into their hearts by the pathway of their vision, unable to move or think or even speak good words. [D. 114.] Others, spying the pleasant shade of a banyan, would spread soft leaves and grass and say, 'Rest from your toil awhile, and a little later, or in the morning, go on your way again.' [C. 115.] Others, again, would fill a jar and bring water and say in gentle tones, 'Drink, Lord!'

Rāma, the perfection of grace and courtesy, hearing their loving words and seeing their great affection, and perceiving that Sītā was weary, would halt for a while in the banyan's shade. Men and women rapturously gazed on their beauty; eye and mind were charmed by their matchless loveliness. As the partridge gazes on the moon, on every side all fixed their rapt and blissful gaze on Rāma's face. His body shone like a young *tamāla* in hue; a myriad Loves would be enamoured at the sight. Laksman, radiant and fair as a flash of lightning, handsome from head to foot, rejoiced the soul. Dressed in ascetic garb, with quivers at their sides and bows and arrows glittering in their lotus hands; [D. 115.] on their heads the knotted hair, a glorious crown; broad breasts, long arms, large eyes, fair faces like the full moon of autumn, and on them gleaming beads of sweat.

[C. 116.] It is beyond my power to describe that ravishing pair; for their beauty was great and my skill is small. All gazed upon the comeliness of Rāma, Laksman and Sītā, and dwelt on it with heart and mind and soul. Athirst for love, men and women stood entranced, like deer or does dazed by a light. The village women drew near to Sītā, but for very love shrank from questioning her. Time after time they all touched her feet and spoke to her in simple, tender tones: 'Princess, we would ask somewhat, but, like timid women, fear to put our questions. Pardon, mistress, our rude manners; take it not ill, for we are but countrywomen. These two princes of native charm, from whom emerald and gold have borrowed

their bright hues, [D. 116.] one dark, one fair, young and very handsome, in whom all beauty dwells, with faces like the autumn moon and eyes like autumn lotuses, [C. 117.] who would put to shame a myriad Loves, say, fair lady, what are they to you ?'

Sitā was embarrassed when she heard their tender and affectionate question and smiled to herself. She looked at them, then turned her eyes to the ground; she felt confused, fair Sitā, with a double diffidence.<sup>1</sup> Thus abashed, the fawn-eyed lady, with voice sweet as the cuckoo's notes, gently and lovingly replied, 'This one, of natural grace and fair complexion, is my husband's younger brother, and his name is Laksman.' Then she hid her face, fair as the moon, with the border of her robe, and looked towards her husband with knitted brows; glancing sideways like a pretty wagtail, Sitā showed them by signs that that was her lord.

All the village women were as pleased as beggars who have plundered a hoard of riches. [D. 117.] With the utmost devotion they fell at Sitā's feet and showered their blessings on her: 'Long may your wedded happiness endure, while earth rests on the serpent's head ! [C. 118.] May you be beloved of your husband as Pārvati of hers ! And ever, lady, be gracious unto us ! Again and again with folded hands we beseech you to return by this same road and allow us, your handmaids, to see you once more.'

Sitā saw that they were all athirst for love and consoled them with many a tender word, as the moonlight brings comfort to the lilies. Then Laksman, reading Raghubar's thoughts, gently asked the people the way; the men and women were grieved to hear him ask it; they trembled with emotion and their eyes filled with tears. Then, pondering the ways of fate, they composed themselves, and deciding on the easiest road, pointed it out to them.

[D. 118.] So Raghunāth went on his way with Laksman and Jānaki, dismissing them all with affectionate words, but taking their hearts with him.

[C. 119.] Men and women loudly lamented as they returned home, inwardly blaming fate. Sorrowfully they said to one another, 'The acts of God are illogical. He is altogether uncontrolled, hard-hearted and ruthless. He who has made the moon sickly and stained, the tree that grants all wishes nothing but a tree, and the ocean salt—he it is who has sent the princes to the

<sup>1</sup> On the one hand she found it embarrassing to reply; on the other, she did not wish to hurt their feelings by remaining silent.

woods! If God has given these the forest for their home, of what use are the luxuries that he has wrought? If these roam the roads with no protection for their feet, in vain has God invented all those vehicles. If these spread grass and leaves and lie upon the ground, why did the Creator fashion comfortable beds? If God has given these the shade of spreading trees for their dwelling-place, it was to no purpose that he laboured to build glittering palaces. [D. 119.] If these, most beautiful and delicate, wear hermit's dress and knot the hermit's matted hair, in vain has the Artificer fashioned all kinds of ornaments and dress. [C. 120.] If these eat bulbs and roots and fruit, whatever is the use of ambrosia and such delicious foods?

But some said, 'Their beauty is original; they sprang to birth of their own will; God did not make them. Search among all the works of God of which the Vedas speak, all in the fourteen worlds that can be heard or seen or fancied, search and see—where can a man like this be found, and where a woman? God was enchanted when he saw them and set out to create others of a like design; he worked very hard, but not one equalled the pattern, and he was so jealous that he took them to the forest and hid them there.' Others said, 'We are ignorant enough, but we do consider ourselves supremely blessed; those, moreover, who have seen them, who see them now and who will see them hereafter have in our opinion won the highest merit.'

[D. 120.] Such were the loving words they spoke with brimming eyes: 'How can such delicate children travel so difficult a road?'

[C. 121.] The women were as troubled by their love as the *cakavi* at eventide. As they thought upon their tender lotus feet and the hard road, with hearts disquieted they cried in piteous tones, 'Earth shrinks when it touches their tender, rosy feet as our hearts shrink! If the lord of the world has sent them to the woods, why has he not carpeted the road with flowers? If we may ask of God one blessing and obtain it, let it be that we keep them, sister, in our eyes.' Those men and women who had not come in time and had not been able to see Sītā and Rāma, when they heard of their great beauty, anxiously inquired of their friends how far they would have travelled by then; and those who were able ran and beheld them, and returned rejoicing that their lives had been crowned with blessedness. [D. 121.] But the weak women, the children and old men wrung their hands and sorrowed. Thus wherever Rāma went, people were overpowered by love.

[C. 122.] So in every village there was gladness when they beheld the moon of the lily-like Solar race. Those who had heard some report of what had happened blamed the king and the queen. But some said, 'How good of the king to grant us what our eyes most desired !' And others, both men and women, said to one another in simple loving words, 'Blessed are that father and mother who gave them birth, and blessed that city from which they have come ! Blessed are the lands and hills and woods and villages, blessed every spot their feet have trod ! The Creator rejoiced in the making of any who are their most beloved friends !' The beautiful story of Rāma and Lakṣman, the wayfarers, was noised abroad on every road in the forest.

[D. 122.] Thus the sun of the lotus Solar race brought joy to the people on his way, as with Sītā and Sumitrā's son he journeyed on, looking at the woods. [C. 123.] Rāma walked in front and Lakṣman behind him, wearing with dignity their hermit's dress; and between the two came Sītā, resplendent as Illusion between the Absolute and the Individual Soul. Again, to describe her beauty as I fancy it, she was as lovely as Rati between Spring and Kāmadeva; or if I may search my mind for yet another comparison, she was as charming as Rohinī between Budha and the Moon.<sup>1</sup> As she walked along the road, Sītā timidly set her feet between the footprints of her lord, while Lakṣman, avoiding the footprints of Sītā and Rāma, kept them on the right as he walked. Unutterable was the beauty of the love that united Rāma, Lakṣman and Sītā; how then can I describe it ? Birds and beasts were enchanted by the sight of their loveliness; Rāma the traveller stole their hearts away.

[D. 123.] All those who beheld the two brothers on their journey with Sītā the beloved blissfully and without toil reached the end of the difficult road of birth and death. [C. 124.] And even to this day in whosoever heart abides the vision of those wayfarers, Lakṣman, Sītā and Rāma, he finds the road that leads to Rāma's realm, a road few sages ever find.

Then Raghbir, perceiving that Sītā was weary and seeing a banyan tree and cool water near by, rested there and took a meal of bulbs and roots and fruit; and early in the morning Raghurāi bathed and went on his way. Gazing at the woods and lakes and

<sup>1</sup> Rohinī, the fourth lunar asterism, is the wife of the moon, and Budha, the planet Mercury, their son.

hills in all their beauty, the Lord arrived at Vālmīki's hermitage. Rāma saw that the sage's retreat was very charming, set among noble hills and pleasant woods with clear water at hand; in the ponds grew lotuses, and the forest trees were flowering and bees drunk with honey made sweet murmuring, while a number of birds and beasts mingled their clamour, feeding together in happy harmony.

[D. 124.] When he beheld the pure and lovely hermitage, the Lotus-eyed was glad. Hearing that Raghubir had come, the sage came forth to greet him. [C. 125.] Rāma prostrated himself before the sage and the noble Brāhmaṇ gave him his blessing. When he saw Rāma's beauty, his eyes were gladdened and with all deference he brought him to his hermitage. The high sage sent for sweet bulbs and roots and fruit for his most beloved guests, and Sītā and Rāma and Sumitrā's son partook of them. Then the sage offered them a pleasant place to rest in. Profound was Vālmīki's joy as he looked on the perfect pattern of bliss.

Then Raghuṛai, folding his lotus hands, spoke a word that pleased the hermit's ears: 'O lord of sages, you behold all time, past, present and to come. The universe lies on your hand like a plum.' So saying, the Lord told him all his story and just how the queen had sent him to the forest. [D. 125.] 'My father's promise, my mother's favour, the installation of a brother like Bharat and my own visit to you, my lord—all these are the consequence of past merit won. [C. 126.] When I behold your feet, O king of sages, all my good deeds win their reward. Now, wherever you may bid me, and no anchorite be disturbed—for those monarchs by whom hermits and ascetics are vexed burn even where there is no fire; the satisfaction of a Brāhmaṇ is the root of good fortune, and the wrath of that god on earth consumes with fire a thousand families—with this in mind tell me some place where I may go with Sītā and Sumitrā's son and there make my dwelling for a time, O gracious sage, constructing a pleasant hut of leaves and grass.'

When the wise hermit heard Raghubar's simple and straightforward words, he said, 'Well said indeed! How should you not speak thus, O Banner of the house of Raghu, eternal guardian of the bounds of scriptural revelation? [Ch. 5.] You are the guardian of the bounds of revelation, O Rāma, Lord of the world, and Jānakī is Illusion, who at the nod of her gracious lord creates, preserves or destroys the world; and he who supports the earth, the thousand-headed Serpent King, is Laksman, sovereign of all

created things. As a king have you come to slay the demon host and accomplish the purpose of the gods.

[S. 126.] 'Your true form, Rāma, transcends speech and reason, incomprehensible, ineffable, infinite, called ever by the Veda "Not thus, not thus"! [C. 127.] The world is visible and you are he who watches its play; Brahmā, Hari and Śambhu you make to dance like puppets. Not even they can comprehend your mysteries; who else, then, can know you as you are? He only knows you to whom you grant that knowledge; and when he knows you, he becomes one with you. It is by your grace, Raghunandan, that your votary knows you, who touch the votary's heart like cooling sandalwood. Your body is True Thought and Bliss, immutable; they know it who have won the right to know it. Yet to accomplish the purpose of saints and gods you have put on the form of man and speak and act as does a human king. Fools are perplexed, O Rāma, when they see and hear your acts, and wise men are gladdened. All that you say and do is fitting, for one should dance in keeping with one's part.<sup>1</sup>

[D. 127.] 'You ask me where you should stay; but with diffidence I ask you to tell me where you are not; then will I point out a place.'

[C. 128.] When Rāma heard the hermit's words, so utterly devoted, he was embarrassed and smiled to himself. Vālmīki, too, smiled and spoke again in tones of ambrosial sweetness: 'Listen, Rāma! I will tell you now a dwelling where you may abide with Sītā and Laksman. Those whose ears are like the seas into which the stories of your life like many rivers continually flow, and yet they are not filled—in their hearts be your beautiful abode. Those who have made their eyes as the cuckoo and yearn only for your presence as the bird for a cloud, and who crave only your true form as the cuckoo scorns great rivers, oceans and lakes, finding contentment only in the raindrop—dwell, Raghunāyak, with your brother and Sītā in the blissful home of their hearts.

[D. 128.] 'He whose tongue tells the tale of your perfections, culled from your glory as the swan gathers pearls from the Mānasa lake—in his heart dwell, O Rāma. [C. 129.] He whose nostrils ever reverently breathe in the pure and lovely fragrance of offerings made to the Lord; he who eats food dedicated to you and wears dress and ornaments consecrated to the Lord; those whose heads

<sup>1</sup> i.e., you are playing the part of a man, so it is fitting that your words and actions should accord with that part.

are bowed with love and great humility when they behold a god, a *guru* or a Brāhmaṇ; whose hands perpetually worship Rāma's feet; whose hearts rely on Rāma and none other; whose feet make pilgrimage to Rāma's holy places—in their souls dwell, O Rāma. Those who continually repeat the royal incantation of your Name and worship you with all their kin; who offer the various kinds of libation and burnt-sacrifice; who feast the Brāhmaṇs and give them many gifts; who regard their *guru* as greater even than yourself and serve and honour him in every way; [D. 129.] and for all this demand but one reward, devotion to the feet of Rāma—dwell in the temple of their hearts, Sītā and Raghunandan together.

[C. 130.] 'Those who know no lust or anger, pride, arrogance or delusion, no greed or undue emotion, inordinate affection or hatred; those in whose souls is found no guile, conceit of self or fraudulence—in their hearts dwell, O Raghurāya. Those who love all and work the good of all, to whom pain and pleasure, praise and abuse are one; who speak with careful thought the word of truth and love; who, waking or asleep, rest under your protection; who seek in you alone the way of salvation—in their hearts dwell, O Rāma. Those who look on another's wife as their own mother and regard another's wealth as more poisonous than poison; who rejoice when they see another's prosperity and are sore distressed at his misfortune; who hold you, Rāma, dear as their own lives—in their hearts be your blest abode.

[D. 130.] 'To whom, dear Lord, you are master and friend, father, mother and *guru*, all these—dwell in the temple of their hearts, two brothers together with Sītā.

[C. 131.] 'Those who regard the good that is in all and disregard the evil; who suffer trouble for the sake of Brāhmaṇs and cows; who are of account in the world for their knowledge of the rules of conduct—their soul is your fit abode. He who knows your goodness and his own sinfulness; who puts his whole trust in you and loves the votaries of Rāma—in his heart dwell with Sītā. He who abandons caste and brotherhood, wealth, duty and position, dear kinsfolk and happy home, and treasures in his soul yourself alone—in his heart, Raghurāi, make your stay. He to whom heaven and hell and liberation are all one—for everywhere he sees you bearing bow and arrows—he who is your servant in thought and word and deed—in his heart, Rāma, make your dwelling-place. [D. 131.] He who needs nothing ever, but loves you with a simple love—dwell always in his heart; that is your own abode!'

[C. 132.] Such were the dwelling-places the high sage suggested, and Rāma was pleased with his affectionate speech. Then said the sage, 'Hearken, lord of the Solar race! I will tell you of a retreat to meet your present needs. Make your abode on the hill of Citrakūṭa, where you will find every comfort. It is a beautiful hill with pleasant woods, the haunt of elephants, lions, deer and birds. There, too, is a sacred river, mentioned in the Purāṇas, which Atri's wife brought there by the power of her penance; it is a tributary of Gaṅgā and is called Mandākīni; it swallows up all sins as a witch devours children. Atri and many other great sages dwell there, practising austerities with prayer and penance and mortifying the flesh. Go there and bring fruition to the labours of them all, O Rāma, and confer dignity on the holy mountain.'

[D. 132.] Thus did the great sage tell of the measureless majesty of Citrakūṭa, and the two brothers went there with Sītā and bathed in the holy stream.

[C. 133.] 'Lakṣman,' said Raghubar, 'this is a fair spot by the river; now choose some place where we may stay.' Lakṣman looked at the north bank of the Payasvini and said, 'A ravine runs right round in the shape of a bow, with the river for its string and self-control, continence and charity for its arrows and all the sins of the Kaliyuga its prey; while Citrakūṭa is like the steadfast huntsman who faces his quarry and strikes with unerring aim.' So saying, Lakṣman pointed out the place and Raghubar was delighted when he saw it. When the gods perceived that Rāma was pleased with the spot, they came with their chief architect; they all came disguised as Kols and Kirāts and fashioned fair dwellings of leaves and grass; two huts they fashioned, passing beautiful, one charming small one and one large. [D. 133.] In that beautiful abode the Lord shone glorious, with Lakṣman and Jānakī, like Love in hermit's garb with Rati and the lord of seasons, Spring.

[C. 134.] At that time there came to Citrakūṭa the immortal gods and serpents, Kinnaras and guardians of the quarters. Rāma did obeisance to them all and the gods gazed with joy on the vision their eyes had most desired. Raining down flowers, the company of gods exclaimed, 'Lord, this day we have found a lord!' They told him then of their unutterable woes and humbly prayed for succour, and then set out for their several homes rejoicing.

When it was noised abroad that Raghusundaran had come to stay at Citrakūṭa, the sages came there; and when he saw the throng of

sages joyously approaching, the moon of the house of Raghu prostrated himself before them. The sages clasped Raghubar to their hearts and gave him their blessing, praying that their words might be proved true. They gazed upon the beauty of Sītā, Sumitrā's son and Rāma and accounted all their pious endeavours to have met their due reward. [D. 134.] The Lord paid the assemblage of sages all due honour and dismissed them; and they practised their austerities, with prayer and sacrifice and penance, in their several hermitages, as they would.

[C. 135.] When the Kols and Kirāts heard the news, they were as happy as though the Nine Treasures<sup>1</sup> had come to their homes. They filled leaf-platters with bulbs and roots and fruit and ran as beggars run to plunder stores of gold. Others who met them on the road questioned those among them who had seen the two brothers, and discoursing together of Raghubir's beauty, they all came and saw Raghurāi. With profound obeisance they laid their offerings before him and gazed upon the Lord with great devotion. They stood there all about him like painted figures, trembling with emotion, and their eyes overflowed with tears. When Rāma perceived that they were all beside themselves with love, he received them with honour and spoke to them kindly. Again and again they did obeisance to the Lord and addressed him humbly with folded hands:

[D. 135.] 'Now, O Lord, that we have seen your feet, we have all found a lord. Blessed are we that you have come among us, O king of Kosala! [C. 136.] Happy that earth, that forest, road and hill, wherever, Lord, you have set your feet! Happy those birds and beasts that haunt the woods, that have beheld you and crowned their lives with joy! Happy, too, are all we and our families, who have feasted our eyes on your presence! It is a fair spot you have chosen to dwell in, and one where you may stay at ease in every season. We shall do you all possible service, protecting you from elephants, lions, snakes and tigers. We, O Lord, are familiar with every step of the wild woodlands, the hills and caves and chasms. We shall take you out hunting in this place and that

<sup>1</sup> nāma nidhi: the Nine Treasures are attendant on Kuvera or on Lakṣmī. They are called padma, mahāpadma, śankha, makara, kacchapa, mukunda, nila, kunda and varcea. (Another list has nanda and kharba for the last two.) The possession of any one of these brings a man wealth of its peculiar kind: e.g. padma brings gold, silver and copper and success in business dealings; mahāpadma, all sorts of precious stones.

and show you lakes and springs and other spots where there is water. We and all our kinsfolk are your servants, Lord; hesitate not to give us your commands.'

[D. 136.] That Lord whom the Veda cannot define nor the mind of the sage comprehend, the home of compassion, listened to the words of the Kirāts as a father to the prattling of his child. [C. 137.] Nothing but love is dear to Rāma; let him who will understand this understand.

Rāma then contented all the forest-dwellers with gentle words and so dismissed them. Bowing their heads, they departed and went home, discoursing of the Lord's perfections as they went.

Thus the two brothers, with Sītā, took up their abode in the forest and brought happiness to gods and sages. From the day when Raghunāyak came and dwelt there the forest brought blessing to all. All kinds of trees bore flowers and fruit, hung with lovely creeper-canopies. Like the tree of Paradise they grew in all their native gracefulness, as though they had deserted the groves of heaven and come to flourish there; and swarms of bees made sweet murmuring, while breezes, soft, cool and fragrant, blew refreshingly. [D. 137.] Birds uttered their several notes—blue jays, koels, parrots, cuckoos, *cakavās* and partridges—charming the ear and ravishing the heart. [C. 138.] Elephants, lions, monkeys, boars and deer all roamed the woods together in perfect harmony. The very beasts were glad when they beheld the beauty of Rāma as he wandered in search of prey. All the forests of the gods that there are in the world were envious when they saw the woods where Rāma dwelt. Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī, Yamunā, daughter of the Sun, Narmadā and Godāvarī, sacred rivers all, and every lake and sea, and streams both small and great, were loud in praise of Mandākīni; while all the mountains of the east and west, Kailāsa and Mandara and Meru, where dwell the gods, and all such hills as the Himālaya sang the renown of Citrakūṭa; and Vindhyaśala rejoiced, nor could contain his joy, that without toil he had been so exalted. [D. 138.] 'Blessed above all and of high merit are the birds and beasts, the creepers, trees and every kind of herb that are at Citrakūṭa!' So cried the gods throughout the day and night.

[C. 139.] All creatures that had eyes, gazing on Raghubar, forgot their sorrows, glad that they had been born. Happy, too, was motionless creation as it touched the dust of his feet, and all were heirs of his high realm. That forest and hill, in all their

native loveliness, brought blessing to all and even sanctified the holy. How can one describe the majesty of that spot where the ocean of delight made his abode? The glory of that wood where Sītā, Laksman and Rāma came to dwell, leaving the Ocean of Milk<sup>1</sup> and abandoning Avadh, not even a hundred thousand Śesas, each with his thousand tongues, could tell; then how can I declare it? Can a mere tortoise in a pond lift up Mount Mandara?

Laksman did them service in thought and word and deed; his loving-kindness and affection cannot be described. [D. 139.] Moment by moment beholding the feet of Sītā and Rāma and recognizing the love they bore him, Laksman never even in his dreams regretted brothers, mother, father or home. [C. 140.] Living happily with Rāma, Sītā quite forgot her city, family and home. Moment by moment gazing on her husband's face, she was as enraptured as the partridge looking on the moon. As she watched her lord's affection ever growing greater, she rejoiced like the *cakarā* in the daytime; devoted as she was to Rāma's feet, the forest was as dear to Sītā as a thousand Avadhs. Dear to her was the hut of leaves in the company of her beloved, and dear her attendant fawns and birds. The hermits and their wives were as the parents of her lord; bulbs, roots and fruit were like ambrosial food. With her lord beside her, her fair bed of leaves was a hundredfold more pleasant than Kāmadeva's couch. Can the delights of luxury delude one on whose favourable glance the guardians of the spheres depend for their sovereignty? [D. 140.] When the faithful, thinking on Rāma, abandon luxurious delights as nothing worth, small wonder that Rāma's beloved Sītā, Mother of the world, should do so.

[C. 141.] Raghunāth both did and said all that could bring happiness to Sītā and Laksman. He told them stories and legends of ancient times, and Laksman and Sītā listened with the utmost delight. Whenever Rāma remembered Avadh his eyes would fill with tears; thinking on father and mother, kinsfolk and brothers, and Bharat's loving-kindness and spirit of service, the gracious Lord would grieve, but calmed himself, thinking it no time for grief. When they saw him thus, Sītā and Laksman too would be distressed, like a shadow that copies the man who casts it.

<sup>1</sup> *paya payodhi*, or *kṣerasāgara*: here, as often, Sītā is identified with Lakṣmī, and Rāma with Viṣṇu, who as Nārāyaṇa dwells on the Ocean of Milk resting on Śeṣanāga, of whom Laksman is the incarnation.

And when he saw the state of his dear wife and brother, Raghu-nandan the courageous and merciful, who cools like sandalwood the fever of his followers' hearts, would begin to recite some sacred tale, and Lakṣman and Sītā, listening, were happy.

[D. 141.] So Rāma dwelt glorious with Lakṣman and Sītā in their hut of leaves, as Indra dwells in Amarāvatī with Śaci and Jayanta. [C. 142.] The Lord watched over Sītā and Lakṣman as the eyelid guards the pupil of the eye, while Lakṣman looked after Sītā and Raghubir as carefully as an undiscerning fool tends his own body. In this manner the Lord dwelt at ease in the forest, a friend of birds and beasts and gods and anchorites.

I have told the glorious story of Rāma's journey to the woods; now hear how Sumantra came to Avadh. After escorting the Lord thus far, the Niṣāda turned back and came and saw the minister with his chariot. It was with unutterable grief that the Niṣāda beheld the minister so distraught. He was lying on the ground in an agony of sorrow, calling aloud, 'Rāma! Rāma! Sītā! Lakṣman!' The horses were looking towards the south and whinnying, as distressed as birds clipped of their wings. [D. 142.] They would neither eat grass nor drink water, but only shed floods of tears. All the Niṣādas were profoundly moved by the sight of Raghubar's horses.

[C. 143.] Then the Niṣāda composed himself and said, 'Now, Sumantra, have done with sorrowing; you are a learned man and versed in spiritual truth; recognize the fact that the Creator has withdrawn his favour and pluck up courage.' With a number of stories told in consoling tones he took him perforce and set him on the chariot. But he was so faint with grief that he could not drive the chariot; his heart was in such agonizing pain for the loss of Raghubar. The horses reared and bucked and would not go forward; it was as though wild beasts had been brought and harnessed to the chariot; they stumbled and fell as they went, and again looked back, utterly distraught by the grief of separation from Rāma. When anyone mentioned the name of Rāma, Lakṣman or the princess of Videha, they would neigh repeatedly and look towards him with devotion. How can one describe the horses in their sense of loss? They were like a serpent distressed by the loss of its jewel.

[D. 143.] The Niṣāda was distracted with grief at the sight of the minister and his horses. Then he sent for four trustworthy servants to accompany the charioteer. [C. 144.] Thus Guha

dismissed the charioteer and returned, disconsolate beyond words at the parting.

Driving the chariot, the Niśādas set out for Avadh and momently grew more dejected, while Sumantra, a prey to the deepest remorse and wretchedness, cried, 'A curse on a life bereft of Raghubir! This vile body will not last for ever; then why did it not win honour at the time of Raghubir's departure? This life of mine is a vessel of disgrace and iniquity; why sets it not out on its last journey? Alas, my foolish soul has lost its opportunity, and even now my heart breaks not!' He wrung his hands and beat his head and sorrowed like a miser who has lost his hoard of wealth. He went like a warrior with a name for mighty valour who flees in uniform from the field of battle.

[D. 144.] The minister's remorse was like that of some wise and high-born Brāhmaṇa, learned in the Veda and of pious conduct, who has been misled into drinking strong drink. [C. 145.] The agony that set his heart on fire was like that of a woman of noble family, prudent and good, who worships her husband as a god in thought and word and deed, when destiny compels her to part from him. His eyes were filled with tears; he could scarce see or hear; his mind was all distraught with misery; his lips were parched, his mouth was dry, and yet his soul took not its flight; for the hope of reunion after parting checked it like a closed door. The pallor of his countenance was dreadful to behold, as of one who had slain his father and mother; his heart was one great pain, the pain of loss, fierce as a sinner's remorse when he treads the road to hell. He could not speak, but in his heart he groaned, 'What shall I see when I reach Avadh? Whoever sees the chariot, and no Rāma, will shrink from looking on my face. [D. 145.] But when the men and women of the city run anxiously to question me, then I shall have to steel my heart to give them all an answer.

[C. 146.] When all the sorrowful, sad mothers question me, O God, what answer shall I give them? When Laksman's mother asks me where he is, what message of comfort shall I give her? When Rāma's mother comes running, like a cow mindful of her new-weaned calf, and questions me, I shall have to answer, "Rāma, Laksman and the princess of Videha have gone to the forest!" And whosoever asks me, I must give him the same answer. Yes, this is the joy that will be mine at Avadh! When the unhappy king, whose life depends on Raghunāth, questions me, how shall I have the face to answer, "I have conducted the princes to the

forest and come back safe and sound!'. As soon as he hears these tidings of Laksman, Sítá and Ráma, the monarch will abandon his body as of no more value than a blade of grass. [D. 146.] My heart did not break at the loss of my beloved lord, as mud cracks when drained of moisture; and so I know that God has given me a body that can endure the tortures of hell!'

[C. 147.] In this manner he lamented on the way till the chariot arrived right soon at the bank of the Tamasá. There he courteously dismissed the Niśádas, who fell at his feet and returned home despondent. The minister shrank from entering the city, as though he had slain a *guru*, a Bráhman or a cow. He passed the day sitting beneath a tree, then in the evening seized the opportunity to enter Avadh in the dark. He left the chariot at the door and went into the palace; and all who heard the news of his arrival went to the king's gate to look at the chariot. When they recognized the chariot and marked the distress of the horses, their hearts melted within them like hailstones in the heat. The men and women of the city were as troubled as fish when the water sinks low.

[D. 147.] When they heard that the minister had arrived, all the ladies of the court were disturbed, and the palace seemed to him a place of dread, as though spirits of the dead dwelt there. [C. 148.] Very piteously all the queens put their questions, but Sumantra could not answer them; his utterance was choked by grief. He could neither hear nor see, but only asked this one and that, 'Tell me, where is the king?'

When the maidservants saw the minister's agitation, they brought him into Kausalyá's chamber; and when he entered, Sumantra saw the king looking like a moon bereft of its ambrosia. There he was, lying on the ground, utterly dejected, with no throne or couch or ornaments, heaving deep sighs and grieving like Yayáti when he fell from heaven. Moment by moment his breast was rent by sobs of agony, like those Saímpáti uttered when he fell to earth with scorched wings:<sup>1</sup> 'Ráma, O Ráma! Ráma, my beloved son!' he cried, and again, 'O Ráma, Laksman, Sítá!'

[D. 148.] When the minister saw him, he cried, 'Long live the king!' and fell prostrate before him. As soon as he heard him, the king arose in excitement and said, 'Tell me, Sumantra, where is Ráma?'

<sup>1</sup> See K.C. 28.

[C. 149.] The king clasped Sumantra to his bosom like a drowning man who clutches at some support. Affectionately he seated him beside himself and asked with his eyes full of tears, 'Say, dear friend, is Rāma well? Where are Raghunāth, Laksman and the princess of Videha? Have you brought them back with you or have they gone to the forest?' At the question the minister's eyes filled with tears. Once more the king asked with great anxiety, 'Give me news of Sītā, Rāma and Laksman'; and as he thought on Rāma's beauty and virtue and generous nature, his heart was torn with anguish; 'I promised him the kingdom and exiled him to the forest, and when he heard it, he felt no joy or grief; such is the son whom I have lost, and yet I do not die. Who then is so great a sinner as myself?' [D. 149.] Take me, my friend, to wheresoever Rāma, Sītā and Laksman may be; else—it is truth I tell you—now shall my soul go hence!'

[C. 150.] Again and again the king questioned the minister, 'Give me tidings of my most beloved sons, and hasten, my friend, to find some way to bring Rāma, Laksman and Sītā before my eyes.' The minister took courage and gently replied, 'Great king, you are wise and learned; you are brave, O sovereign lord, and chief among the resolute, and have ever sought the company of the good. Birth and death, the suffering of pain and the enjoyment of pleasure, loss and gain, union with those we love and separation from them—all these are ruled by fate and destiny, sire, and are as certain in their sequence as night and day. Fools take delight in pleasure and cry out at pain, but men of courage regard both as one. Be of good cheer, then, with wise determination, O guardian of your people, and grieve no more!'

[D. 150.] Their first stay was by the Tamasā, their second on Gaṅgā's bank; there the two heroes stayed with Sītā after bathing and drinking of its water. [C. 151.] Guha the boatman showed them much kindness and they passed the night at Śringavera; at daybreak Rāma asked for the milk of the banyan and coiled his hair into a knotted crown. Then Rāma's friend called for a boat, and after setting his beloved wife thereon Raghurāī himself embarked. Then Laksman made ready his bow and arrows and with the Lord's permission also went on board. Seeing that I was distressed, Raghubar addressed me kindly with forced composure: "Friend, give my greetings to my father and clasp repeatedly his lotus feet; then fall at his feet and say with all humility, 'Father, be not anxious on my account; by your grace

and favour and merit we shall fare well and happily on the forest paths. [Ch. 6.] By your favour, father, I shall meet with every comfort on my journey in the forest, and then return safely, having obeyed your command, to see your feet again'. Then fall at the feet of all the queens and comfort them and earnestly entreat them to do all they can to make the king of Kosala content. [S. 151.] And to the *guru* give this message, clasping again and again his lotus feet: 'Exhort the king of Avadh not to grieve for me.' [C. 152.] And, friend, make known to all the people of the city and the household my petition and beseech them to regard it: 'He is my truest friend by whose endeavour the monarch rests content.' When Bharat comes, give him this message: 'Cease not to practise sound policy when you ascend the throne; care for your subjects in thought and word and deed, and serve each mother with equal respect. Fulfil your brotherly duty, brother, to the end, doing all service to father, mother and kin; and, brother, so watch over your father that he may never grieve for me.' "

Lakṣman spoke some harsh words, but Rāma checked him and begged me earnestly, as he lived, not to repeat Lakṣman's boyish insolence. [D. 152.] Sītā sent her greetings and was about to say more but grew faint with emotion; her utterance was checked, her eyes filled with tears and she trembled all over.

[C. 153.] 'At that moment, at Raghubar's nod, the ferryman rowed the boat across the river. So departed the glory of the house of Raghu, and I stood there and steeled my heart to watch him. But how can I describe my sorrow that I still lived to return and bring Rāma's messages?' So saying, the minister ceased to speak, a picture of misery and despondency.

When he heard the charioteer's story, the monarch fell to the ground in an agony of despair and writhed like a frantic madman, as fish writhe when troubled by the early rains. All the queens wept and wailed in indescribable anguish; Grief grieved to hear their wailing, and Endurance could no more endure.

[D. 153.] Loud was the lamentation in Avadh when the sound of wailing in the queens' apartments was heard; it was as though a massy thunderbolt had fallen by night in a thicket haunted by flocks of birds. [C. 154.] The monarch was like to die, distressed as a serpent that has lost its jewel; and his senses were all dimmed, as lotuses wither in a waterless pond. When Kausalyā saw the king in this sad state, she was innerly aware that the sun of the Solar line was setting; then Rāma's mother took courage and spoke

a word suited to the moment: 'Bethink you, husband, and remember that separation from Rāma is like a boundless ocean; Avadh is the boat and yourself the helmsman, and all our dear ones are the voyagers who have embarked. If you show courage, they will cross safely to the farther shore; else will all our people drown. Lay my prayer, dear lord, to heart, and Rāma, Lakṣman and Sitā will see us once again.'

[D. 154.] When he heard his dear wife's tender speech, the king opened his eyes and looked up; she was like one pouring cold water on a miserable writhing fish. [C. 155.] Composing himself, the king sat up and said, 'Tell me, Sumantra, where is the gracious Rāma? Where is Lakṣman? Where is my beloved Rāma? Where is dear Sitā, my son's wife?' Many a lamentation did the king utter in his sorrow; the night seemed as long as an age and would never end. The king recalled the blind ascetic's curse<sup>1</sup> and related the whole story to Kausalyā; and as he told the tale, he fell a-sorrowing and cried, 'A curse on my will to live apart from Rāma! Why should I cling any longer to a body that has failed to fulfil the promise of my love? Alas, Raghuandan, dear to me as life! Too many days have I lived without you! Ah, Jānakī and Lakṣman! Ah, Raghubar! balm to your father's heart as a rain-cloud to the cuckoo!'

[D. 155.] Crying, 'Rāma, Rāma!' and again 'Rāma!' and yet again 'Rāma, Rāma!' and 'Rāma!', the king, parted from Raghubar, abandoned his body and entered the abode of the gods.

[C. 156.] So Daśarath reaped his reward, in death as in life, and his spotless fame was noised abroad in countless universes. Living, he beheld the face of Rāma, fair as the moon; and dying for the loss of Rāma, died a glorious death. Overcome by grief, all the queens bewailed him, speaking of his beauty and kindness and strength and majesty. They mourned him with manifold laments and fell upon the ground again and again. Menservants and hand-maidens, too, sorrowfully mourned him, and in every house the citizens were weeping. 'The sun of the Solar line has set this day, than whom none was more righteous, none a more perfect model

<sup>1</sup> The story is told in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Long ago Daśarath, while hunting near the river Sarayū, had shot a young hermit by mistake. In accordance with the boy's dying request, he carried the water which the hermit had drawn from the river to his blind and aged father. When he told the blind father of his son's fate, the ascetic cursed him and foretold that he should die of grief for the loss of a son.

of virtue and beauty!' Thus they spoke, and all abused Kaikeyi, who had robbed the world of its eyes; and so the night was spent in lamentation.

Then came all the great and learned sages; [D. 156.] and Vasishta the sage related various legends appropriate to the hour, and by the light of his own spiritual wisdom lessened the grief they all felt. [C. 157.] Then he filled a boat with oil and set the king's body therein; next, he summoned messengers and said to them, 'Run with all speed to Bharat, but say nothing of the king's death to any anywhere. Only say this much to Bharat when you reach him, that the *guru* has sent you to fetch the two brothers.' The messengers ran off at the sage's bidding and travelled more swiftly than the noblest steeds.

Ever since the trouble began at Avadh Bharat had been vexed by evil omens. He had been dreaming fearful dreams at night and by day had been a prey to a myriad evil apprehensions. Every day he feasted Brähmans and gave them gifts and made offerings to Śiva with various lustral rites;<sup>1</sup> and silently praying to Maheśa, besought him for the welfare of his father and mother, his family and his brothers. [D. 157.] Such were Bharat's forebodings when the messengers arrived. When he heard the *guru*'s commands, he set out with a prayer to Ganeśa.

[C. 158.] Driving his horses swift as the wind, he set out, leaping over rivers and hills and making his way through impenetrable forests. So great was his anxiety that nothing pleased him; he was only thinking, 'Would that I could fly!' Every moment was like a year in the passing. In this state Bharat drew near to the city, and ill omens appeared as he entered it; crows, perched in inauspicious places, cawed discordantly; asses brayed and jackals howled, foreboding ill; Bharat's heart ached to hear them. Lakes, rivers, groves and gardens seemed forlorn, and most of all the city struck him with awe. Birds and beasts, horses and elephants were dreadful to behold, smitten as they were by that fell disease —the loss of Rāma; the men and women of the city were in despair, as though they had lost all their wealth.

[D. 158.] The citizens met him, but uttered not a word; they bowed to him in silence and passed on; nor could Bharat ask any how he fared, so great were the terror and dismay in his heart.

<sup>1</sup> *Śiva abhiṣeka*: a jar of water, with a small hole in the bottom, is set over Śiva's emblem, the water thus being allowed to drip upon it.

[C. 159.] The markets and the streets were fearsome to see, as though a great fire had swept through every quarter of the city.

When Kekaya's daughter—that moon to bring woe to the lotus-like Solar race—heard that her son was coming, she rejoiced. She prepared the lustral lamps and sprang up joyously and ran and met him at the door and brought him into the palace. Bharat saw that the whole household was sorrowing, like a lotus-bed smitten by the frost; but Kaikeyi was as delighted as a Kirātin who has set fire to a forest. When she saw that her son was anxious and depressed, she asked, 'Is all well at my mother's house?' 'All is well,' replied Bharat, and then asked how his own family fared: 'Tell me, where is my father and where are all the queens? Where is Sitā and where Rāma and Laksman, my dear brothers?'

[D. 159.] The wicked woman, with hypocritical tears in her eyes, answered her son's affectionate questions with words that pierced Bharat's ears and soul like a dagger: [C. 160.] 'My son, I had arranged everything to perfection, and poor Mantharā helped me too, but God meanwhile upset my plans to some extent; for the king has passed to Indra's realm.'

When Bharat heard this, he was overwhelmed with grief, trembling like an elephant at a lion's roar. He fell to the ground with an anguished cry: 'Father! Father! Alas, my father! I was not here to see you as you passed to heaven, nor, father, did you entrust me to Rāma's care!' Then he composed himself and rose and asked more calmly, 'Tell me, mother, how came my father to die?' Kaikeyi answered her son as one who scrapes to the quick and pours poison into the wound. The evil, cruel-hearted woman gloated while she told him from the beginning of all that she had done.

[D. 160.] Bharat forgot his father's death when he heard of Rāma's exile to the forest, and thinking that he himself was the cause of it, he was silent and dumbfounded. [C. 161.] Seeing her son's distress, the queen admonished him, as one who applies salt to a burn: 'You should not grieve for your father, my son, for he has gathered merit and renown and won his due reward. While yet he lived, his life was crowned with happiness, and at the last he has entered the realm of the Lord of heaven. Reflect on this and cease to sorrow; now rule the state with royal circumstance.' At these words the prince shrank back in terror, as though a burning coal had touched a festering sore. Then he composed

himself and said with a deep sigh, 'Wicked woman, you have utterly ruined our house! If this was your evil ambition, why did you not slay me at my birth? You cut down a tree and water the leaves! You drain off the water to keep the fish alive! [D. 161.] To be born of the Solar race, with a father like Daśarath and brothers like Rāma and Laksman, and *you* for a mother! But it is of no avail to strive against fate. [C. 162.] When you, vile schemer, plotted this vile scheme, did not your heart break into pieces? Had you no heart-ache when you asked that boon? Did your tongue not rot or your mouth breed worms? Why did the king put trust in you? Surely God robbed him of his wits in his last hour! Not even God can fathom the ways of a woman's heart, a very mine of fraud and vice and worthlessness! The king was simple-minded and kindly, devoted to duty—how should he understand the nature of a woman? What living creature is there in the world that holds not Raghunāth dear as its own life? And that, forsooth, is the Rāma who became your deadly enemy! What are you? Tell me truly. Well, what you are, you are! Up, then, with shamefast face go, and stay where I may never see you more! [D. 162.] God has brought me forth from a womb that is Rāma's foe; then who so guilty as I? 'Twere vain that I should reproach you!'

[C. 163.] When Śatrughna heard of his mother's villainy, he was consumed with fury, but could do nothing. Just at that moment the humpback entered the room, dressed up in all kinds of finery and ornaments. Laksman's younger brother was enraged when he saw her, as though an offering of *ghī* had been poured on to a blazing fire. He planted a well-aimed flying kick on her hump and she fell face downwards on the ground with a shriek. Her hump was shattered and her skull fractured, her teeth were broken and blood streamed from her mouth. 'Alas, my fate!' she cried. 'What harm have I done? A cruel return for doing good!' Hearing this, Śatrughna, deeming her altogether false, seized her topknot and began to drag her about; but the merciful Bharat released her, and the two brothers went to see Kausalyā.

[D. 163.] Dressed in soiled clothes and pale with grief, her body wasted with the burden of her sorrow, she looked like some fair golden creeper of Paradise in the forest, smitten by the frost.

[C. 164.] When she saw Bharat, his mother rose and ran to him, but her head swam round and she fell to the ground in a swoon. Bharat was overwhelmed with distress at the sight,

and heedless of his own condition fell at her feet. 'Mother,' he cried, 'where is my father? Let me see him! Where is Sītā, and where my two brothers, Rāma and Laksman? Why was Kaikeyi born into the world, or, if born, why was she not barren instead of bearing me to shame my family, a vessel of infamy, the enemy of all I love? Who in the three worlds so hapless as I who have caused you such wretchedness, my mother? My father is in heaven and Raghubar in the forest, and I alone, like an evil star, the cause of all this woe! A curse upon me! I have become a fire in the bamboo grove, a sharer in intolerable grief and anguish and a partner in crime!'

[D. 164.] When she heard Bharat's gentle words, his mother recovered herself and arose, shedding floods of tears as she raised him and clasped him to her bosom. [C. 165.] His simple-hearted mother took him to her breast as lovingly as if he had been Rāma returned; then she embraced Laksman's younger brother with uncontrollable grief and affection; and when they saw her tenderness, all the people said, 'How should Rāma's mother not act thus?' His mother took Bharat on her lap, and wiping away his tears said gently, 'Dear child, take courage now, I adjure you; sorrow no more, remembering that the times are out of joint. You know the ways of destiny and fate to be immutable; away then with melancholy and despair! Blame no one, my son; for it is the Creator who has set his face against me; in the midst of so much sorrow he will not let me die, and who knows what may be his pleasure now?'

[D. 165.] 'At his father's command, my son, Raghubir put off his ornaments and his dress, and feeling neither joy nor sorrow, donned the hermit's garb of bark. [C. 166.] His face was cheerful and in his heart was neither joyousness nor indignation. He did all he could to comfort everybody as he set out for the forest. When she heard of it, Sītā would go with him; she would not stay behind, so deep was her devotion to Rāma's feet. And no sooner did Laksman hear of it than he too arose to accompany him; nor would he stay though Raghunāth endeavoured to dissuade him. Then Raghupati bowed to everyone and set forth with Sītā and his younger brother. Thus Rāma, Laksman and Sītā went to the woods, but I went not with them nor sent my spirit with them. All this took place before my very eyes, yet did not my luckless soul desert my body! I feel no shame when I think of my love, but only that a son like Rāma should have such a

mother as I! The king knew well the time to live and the time to die, but my heart is hard as a hundred thunderbolts.'

[D. 166.] When they heard Kausalyā's words, Bharat and the ladies of the court wept and sorrowed; the king's palace seemed like a home of woe. [C. 167.] Bharat and his brother both wept unrestrainedly; Kausalyā clasped them to her heart and did all she could to comfort Bharat with words of prudent wisdom. Bharat, too, consoled all the queens with beautiful stories from the Purāṇas and the Vedas, and with folded hands spoke in all sincerity these simple and straightforward words: 'O God, may I be held guilty of all the crimes that those commit who slay their parents or their son, who burn the stalls of cows or cities where Brāhmans dwell, who murder wife or children, or poison friend or king, and all transgressions, great or small, of thought or word or deed, of which the poets tell, if, mother, I consented to this plot!

[D. 167.] 'May God award me the lot of those who turn from the feet of Hari and Hara to worship the grim spirits of the dead, if, mother, I consented to this plot!

[C. 168.] 'Those who recite the Veda for profit or traffic in holy things, backbiters and informers, the fraudulent, the crooked, the quarrelsome and the passionate, those who revile the Veda, the enemies of all the world, the covetous, the lascivious, the avaricious and those who cast an envious eye on another's wealth or wife—may their awful lot be mine, if, mother, I consented to this plot!

'Those who care naught for the company of the good, those hapless wretches who turn from the path of spiritual wisdom, who worship not Hari in human form and take no pleasure in the glory of Hari and Hara, who abandon the Vedic path and follow the opposite road, swindlers who adopt a disguise to cheat the world—may Śāṅkara award me a lot like theirs, if, mother, I knew aught of this secret scheme!'

[D. 168.] Hearing Bharat's sincere, straightforward words, his mother said, 'My son, you have ever been Rāma's friend in thought and word and deed. [C. 169.] Rāma is your very life, and dearer than life are you to Raghupati. The moon may drop poison, ice send forth fire, or fish care not for water, or ignorance persist when knowledge has dawned, but you can never be Rāma's enemy. Whosoever says that you consented to this plot will never for a moment enjoy peace or happiness.' So saying, his mother clasped Bharat to her heart; milk trickled from her breast and her eyes were full of tears.

Thus, as they sat there, the whole night was spent in long-continued mourning. Then came Vāmadeva and Vasiṣṭha, who called together all the ministers and nobles. The sage gave Bharat much good advice, with spiritual instruction suited to the occasion; [D. 169.] 'Take courage, my son,' he said, 'and do what must be done today.'

So Bharat arose at the *guru's* bidding and ordered all to be made ready. [C. 170.] He had the king's body bathed with rites prescribed in the *Veda* and a very splendid bier prepared. Bharat clasped the feet of all the queens and stayed them from the burning,<sup>1</sup> and the queens consented in the hope of seeing Rāma. Many loads of sandalwood and aloes were brought and countless kinds of fragrant spices, and a funeral pyre was built on the bank of the Sarayū, looking like glorious steps to heaven. Thus were all the rites of cremation observed and the ceremonial bathing and the funeral obsequies<sup>2</sup> performed; and after studying all the Codes and the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, Bharat made the ten days' offering to the dead.<sup>3</sup> All the orders the high sage gave him he carried out a thousand times over, and at the time of his purification he gave all manner of gifts—cows, horses, elephants and many kinds of carriages, [D. 170.] thrones, jewels, raiment, grain, land, money and houses—all these he gave, and the Brāhmans received them and were well content. [C. 171.] A hundred thousand tongues would not suffice to tell all the rites that Bharat performed for his father.

Then choosing an auspicious day, the great sages came and called together all the ministers and nobles. All took their seats in the royal court, and the sages sent for Bharat and his brother Śatrughna. Vasiṣṭha seated Bharat by his side and addressed him in words of moral and religious worth. First, the high sage told the whole story of all that wicked Kaikeyī had done; then he praised the king's loyalty to duty and truth, who by giving up his life had proved his love to the end. Thrilled with emotion and with eyes full of tears, the lord of sages spoke of Rāma's virtues and noble nature, and then with heartfelt grief and affection the wise sage praised the love of Laksman and Sītā.

<sup>1</sup> i.e., entreated them not to ascend the funeral pyre with their husband.

<sup>2</sup> *tildāñjili*: the offering of a handful of water mixed with sesamum seeds.

<sup>3</sup> *dasagāta bidhānā*: for ten days balls of rice are offered to the spirit of the deceased, each ball providing it with part of its new body.

[D. 171.] 'Hearken, Bharat,' said the lord of sages sorrowfully, 'fate is all-powerful; loss and gain, life and death, fame and infamy are in the hand of God. [C. 172.] This being so, who can be blamed or who the object of a fruitless indignation? Bethink you, my son, king Daśarath should not be mourned. Grieve rather for that Brāhmaṇ who knows not the Veda, but abandons religious duty and devotes himself to things of sense. Grieve for that king who understands not statecraft and loves not his people as he loves his life. Grieve for that Vaiśya who is rich but niggardly, unpractised in hospitality or devotion to Śiva. Grieve for that Śūdra who dishonours Brāhmaṇs, garrulous, ambitious and wise in his own conceits. Grieve, too, for a woman who deceives her husband, perverse and quarrelsome and self-willed. Grieve for the student who breaks his vows and obeys not his *guru*'s behests.

[D. 172.] Grieve for the householder who in his folly abandons the way of action. Grieve for the ascetic who is void of wisdom and detachment and is devoted to this world of seeming. [C. 173.] Grieve for that eremite who has given up penance and delights in luxury. Grieve for the slanderer, causelessly wrathful, at enmity with parents and *guru* and kin. Grieve sore for him who injures others, who cherishes self and is utterly merciless. Grieve above all for him who serves not Hari with a guileless heart. But the king of Kosala should not be mourned, whose mighty power is manifest in the fourteen worlds. No king, O Bharat, has ever been, now is, or shall be hereafter such a king as your father. Brahmā, Hari, Hara, the king of heaven and the lords of the quarters all tell the tale of Daśarath's perfections.

[D. 173.] 'Tell me, my son, how can anyone exalt him who has such perfect sons as Rāma, Lakṣman, yourself and Śatrughna? [C. 174.] The king is fortunate in every way; to grieve for him is vain. Hear this and mark it well, and cease to sorrow. Act in obedience to the king's command; the king has given you the throne and you must honour your father's word, who to fulfil his promise abandoned Rāma and gave his life a burnt-offering in the fire of Rāma's loss. The king valued his word, but not his life; honour, then, my son, your father's word; obey the king's command, for in obedience lies your highest good. Paraśurāma obeyed his father's behest and slew his mother, as all the worlds bear witness; Yayāti's son surrendered to him his youth, incurring neither guilt nor disgrace for obedience to his father's command.

[D. 174.] 'Those who obey their father's commands, with no thought of right or wrong, are crowned with joy and honour and dwell in the abode of the king of heaven. [C. 175.] Then of a surety fulfil the monarch's word; cherish your people and no longer mourn; thus will the king be comforted in heaven, and you win merit and honour without blame. It is a Vedic rule—and all the scriptures agree thereto—that he receives the royal dignities on whom his father confers them. Reign, then, and have done with sorrow; do what I say—I advise you for your good. Rāma and the princess of Videha will be glad when they hear it, and no one versed in sacred lore will say you have done wrong; and Kausalyā and all the other queens will be glad in the gladness of your people. Whoever knows how bound you are to Rāma in affection will take your action in good part. When Rāma returns, deliver up to him the kingdom and serve him with loving service.'

[D. 175.] With folded hands the ministers said, 'Be sure to obey the *guru*'s command, and when Raghupati returns, you may then do what is right and fitting.' [C. 176.] Kausalyā, too, took courage and said, 'My son, your *guru*'s commands are for the best; honour them, then, as such and cheerfully obey them. Cease to lament; submit to fate. Raghupati is in the forest, the monarch reigns in heaven, and you, my son, are shrinking from your task! But your family and subjects, your ministers and all the queens rely on you alone, my son. Seeing that fate is adverse and destiny unfavourable, be of good courage—I, your mother, adjure you—submit to your *guru*'s will and do as he bids you; protect your people and relieve your kinsfolk of their distress.'

Bharat listened to the *guru*'s words and the approval of the ministers, as welcome to his heart as cooling sandalwood; but when he heard his mother's gentle speech, so full of loving-kindness and simplicity—[Ch. 7.] when Bharat heard his mother's simple plea, he was troubled; his lotus eyes shed tears that watered the fresh shoots of desolation in his heart; and all who then beheld his plight lost consciousness of self and praised him as a pattern of unfeigned love.

[S. 176.] Then Bharat, the very soul of courage, took courage and with folded lotus hands made fitting answer to them all in words that seemed dipped in nectar: [C. 177.] 'The *guru* has given me good advice, and my people and my ministers have all approved it; my mother, too, has thought it right to give me her commands and I would surely wish to obey her. The advice of

a *guru*, a father, a mother, a master or a friend should be cheerfully followed, as for the best; and to ponder whether it be right or wrong is to fail in duty and incur a load of guilt. Now you are giving me simple advice which I would do well to follow; yet, though I fully understand this, my soul is not content. Now do you hearken to my humble entreaty and give me such counsel as I shall be able to follow. I am answering you—but pardon my fault, for good men take no account of the faults and virtues of the sorrowful.

[D. 177.] 'My father is in heaven and Sītā and Rāma are in the forest, and you bid me govern the realm. Is it my good you hope for from this, or some great advantage for yourselves? [C. 178.] My good lies in the service of Rāma, but my mother's crooked dealings have robbed me of this good; yet reflection has shown me that herein and nowhere else can I find happiness. Of what value is a throne unless I see the feet of Laksman, Rāma and Sītā? It is naught but a burden, as useless as a load of jewels on a naked body or the contemplation of the Absolute without detachment. Vain are all the pleasures of life when the body is diseased; vain are prayer and austerities without devotion to Hari; vain a fair body without a soul; and all I am and have is valueless apart from Raghurāi. Give me leave to go to Rāma, for herein assuredly lies my happiness; and if by crowning me you desire some advantage for yourselves, your proposal is the outcome of unwise affection.

[D. 178.] 'If you expect happiness when such as I reign here—Kaikeyi's son, perverse of soul, a shameless foe of Rāma, vilest of the vile—you but delude yourselves. [C. 179.] I tell you truly—hear me, all you, and believe it—a monarch must be righteous. As soon as ever you constrain me to be king, then earth will sink to hell. Who so full of sin as I, on whose account Sītā and Rāma have been banished to the woods? The king exiled Rāma to the forest, and when he had lost him, himself passed to heaven; and I am the villainous cause of all this trouble and yet sit here in my right senses to listen to all this talk! Though I behold the palace bereft of Raghbir, yet I still live to endure the mockery of the world! For my life is indifferent to the holy object that is Rāma and only covetous and hungry for land and carnal pleasures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> So the *sikā*. The line may also be translated: 'Rāma is holy and indifferent to things of sense; it is those who are covetous who are hungry for land and carnal pleasures.'

But how can I express the hardness of my heart, which pours scorn upon the thunderbolt and has won this high estate ?

[D. 179.] 'The effect is harder than the cause,<sup>1</sup> and therein I am not to blame; the thunderbolt is harder and more deadly than the bone<sup>2</sup> and iron than stone. [C. 180.] If this wretched life of mine cleaves to a body born of Kaikeyī's womb, there will be no end to its misery. If in the absence of my dear one I hold life dear, I shall have much to see and hear anon. She has banished Lakṣman, Rāma and Sītā to the forest and has sent her husband to heaven—a kindly deed ! For herself she has won widowhood and infamy, and has brought grief and sorrow on the people. On me she has bestowed happiness, fair fame and a glorious throne ! Kaikeyī has indeed done well for everybody ! What greater blessing can I now enjoy ? And you propose to crown my bliss with royal dignity ! Fitting indeed it is that I should have been born into the world from Kaikeyī's womb. It is God who has done all this for me; then why should the people by common consent lend their aid ?

[D. 180.] 'When a demoniac is afflicted by morbid humours and then stung by a scorpion, and you give him wine to drink, what sort of remedy is that ? [C. 181.] The all-wise Creator has decreed for me that which befits a son of Kaikeyī in this world; but in vain has God granted me the high honour of being a son of Daśarath and Rāma's younger brother. You all bid me assume sovereign power, and all approve the king's command. Then how and whom shall I answer ? Let each one tell me frankly what his pleasure is. Tell me, who except myself and my wicked mother will say that I have acted rightly ? Who is there in all creation save myself to whom Sītā and Rāma are not dear as his own life ? That this supreme disaster should seem to all a great advantage is my misfortune, and no one is to blame; you are moved by anxious doubt and kindness and love, and all you say is right and proper.

[D. 181.] 'Rāma's mother is very simple-hearted and loves me so much that she speaks from natural affection, because she sees how wretched I am. [C. 182.] The *guru* is an ocean of wisdom, as all the world knows; the universe is like a plum in the hollow of his hand; and he too is making ready for my enthronement.

<sup>1</sup> Kaikeyī is the cause and Bharat the effect.

<sup>2</sup> See App., s.v. Dadhicī.

Verily when God withdraws his favour, all avert their faces. No one in the world, save Rāma and Sītā, will say that I did not abet this scheme. So I shall have to listen and bear it patiently; where water is, there in the end is mud. The world will call me vile—I fear not that nor do I trouble about another world; my one consuming and intolerable woe is this, that it is due to me that Sītā and Rāma are unhappy. Lakṣman has crowned his life with happiness, seeing that he has left all to cleave to Rāma's feet; but I was born to banish Raghubar to the woods—but why do I sorrow thus in vain, poor wretch? [D. 182.] I bow my head before you all and declare my grievous misery; the fever in my soul will not abate until I see the feet of Raghunāth.

[C. 183.] 'There is no other plan that I can think of, and who but Raghubar can read the secrets of my heart? This I have determined that early in the morning I shall go to seek my Lord. Though I am wicked and guilty and the cause of all this mischief, yet when he sees me before him as a suppliant, of his infinite mercy he will forgive me all. Raghurāo is the home of kindness and self-effacement, utter simplicity, mercy and love; Rāma has never injured even an enemy; and I, though I have done him wrong, am his child and servant. Believing, then, this to be for my happiness, grant me permission with one voice and give me your gracious blessing, that Rāma may listen to my prayer, as of a faithful servant, and return to his capital. [D. 183.] Though I was born of an evil mother and myself am iniquitous and ever full of faults, I have confidence in Raghubir that he will know me for his own and not forsake me.'

[C. 184.] They all applauded Bharat's words, imbued as they were with the nectar of Rāma's love. The people had been drugged by the deadly poison of bereavement, but now they woke to life as at the sound of some effectual spell.<sup>1</sup> His mother, the ministers, the *guru* and the men and women of the city were all profoundly moved by their affection and kept praising Bharat and saying, 'He is the very image of devotion to Rāma; dear Bharat, it is like you to speak thus, for Rāma loves you as his own life! If any scoundrel in his folly impute to you your mother's wickedness, that villain will make his home in hell for a hundred aeons, together with countless generations of his line. The jewel does not share

<sup>1</sup> *mantra sabīja*: in Tāntrik philosophy the *bija* is the mystical syllable at the opening of a *mantra*.

the guilt and baseness of the serpent; rather, it extracts the poison and puts an end to pain and poverty. [D. 184.] Yes, Bharat, you must indeed set out to seek Rāma in the forest; you have given good advice; you have rescued us all as we were sinking in the ocean of despair.'

[C. 185.] All were as delighted as the cuckoo or the peacock when they hear the rumble of a thunder-cloud; and when they saw that Bharat had quite decided to start early the next morning, they loved him as they loved themselves. Making obeisance to the sage and bowing to Bharat, they all took their leave and went home crying, 'Thanks be to God that Bharat was born into the world!', and extolling his loving-kindness as they went. They were saying to one another, 'This is indeed a happy event!' and were all making ready for the journey. Those who were told to stay and look after their homes felt as though they had been executed; and some said, 'Bid no one stay; who does not long to crown his life with happiness? [D. 185.] Perish that wealth and home and pleasure and those friends and parents and brothers that lend not cheerful aid to our quest for Rāma's feet!'

[C. 186.] In every house they were preparing conveyances of all descriptions, rejoicing at the morrow's setting forth. Bharat went home and reflected that the city, the horses and elephants, the palace and the treasury, in short, all the property belonged to Raghupati, and if he left it without setting a guard over it and went away, he would rue it; for to injure one's lord is the worst of sins, and the true servant is he who protects his master's interests, however much any may find fault with him. Thus reflecting, he sent for trustworthy servants who had never even dreamt of failing in their duty; he told them all he purposed and impressed upon them their high duty and posted each where he was most fit to serve; and after making all these arrangements and posting the guards, Bharat went to see Rāma's mother.

[D. 186.] Versed in the ways of love, Bharat perceived that all the queens were in distress, and ordered palanquins to be prepared and comfortable litters to be made ready.

[C. 187.] The men and women of the city were as desperately anxious for the morrow as the cakavā and his mate. They stayed awake all night till morning dawned; then Bharat summoned his wise ministers and said, 'Take with you all that is necessary for the coronation, for the sage will crown Rāma in the forest; make haste to start.' Whereupon the ministers did obeisance and at once

made ready horses, chariots and elephants. First, the lord of sages mounted his chariot with Arundhati and the materials for the burnt-offering and set out; and then the company of Brāhmans mounted their various vehicles and started, all renowned and dignified ascetics. All the people of the city made ready their carriages and set out for Citrakūṭa, and all the queens set forth, borne in inexpressibly beautiful palanquins. [D. 187.] Then Bharat, after entrusting the city to his faithful servants and courteously seeing all the travellers on their way, set forth with his brother, with his thoughts on the feet of Rāma and Sītā.

[C. 188.] All the men and women were as anxious to see Rāma as elephants that run to quench their thirst. Thinking of Sītā and Rāma suffering hardship in the forest, Bharat and his brother went on foot. When they marked this loving gesture, the people were moved and, dismounting, left their horses, elephants and chariots and walked. But Rāma's mother brought her litter to a halt by Bharat and spoke to him persuasively: 'Mount your chariot, my son—I adjure you as your mother—or our dear people will be put to trouble; for if you go on foot, everyone will follow your example, and they are all wasted with sorrow and unfit to walk.' The two brothers bowed their heads before her feet and obediently mounted their chariots and so journeyed on.

The first day they stayed by the Tamasā, and their second halt was on the bank of the Gomati. [D. 188.] Some drank only milk, while others made a meal of fruit, and some took food but once in the night; for Rāma's sake they had put off their ornaments and given up all luxuries and were observing strict ascetic rules.

[C. 189.] After staying on the bank of the Sai, they started at daybreak and all drew near to Śringavera. When the Niṣāda heard all this news, he was troubled at heart and thought, 'Why is Bharat travelling to the forest? There must be some guileful purpose in his mind. If he has no evil intention in his heart, why should he bring an army with him? He imagines that if he slays Rāma and his brother, he will reign without hindrance and in peace. Bharat has no idea of sound statecraft; first he incurs disgrace and now is like to lose his life; for even if all the powers of heaven and hell were to engage in battle, there is none who can conquer Rāma on the field. And what wonder is it that Bharat should act thus? Poison ivy cannot bear ambrosial fruit!'

[D. 189.] With such thoughts in mind Guha addressed his kinsfolk: 'Be on the alert, all of you; guard well the boats and

sink them and then close the ferry. [C. 190.] Equip yourselves well and close the ferry; and all be prepared to die!<sup>1</sup> I will cross swords with Bharat, nor shall I let him cross the Gaṅgā while I live. Death in battle, and that on Gaṅgā's bank, to offer this my fleeting life in Rāma's cause, an unworthy servant such as I to die at the hand of Rāma's brother and a king—thrice blest were such a death! I shall fight for my master on the battle-field and illuminate the fourteen worlds with my glory; and if I lose my life on Raghunāth's behalf, well, either way I shall taste perfect bliss.<sup>2</sup> He who is not numbered among the good and has no place among Rāma's votaries cumbers the earth, a useless burden, while he lives—naught but an axe to fell the tree of his mother's youth.'

[D. 190.] Thus, no longer downcast, the king of the Niṣādas aroused the zeal of all his men, and thinking on Rāma, called at once for quiver, bow and buckler. [C. 191.] 'Brothers,' he cried, 'make haste to arm yourselves, and when you hear the word of command, let no one play the coward!' All joyously replied, 'So be it, lord!' and excited one another's ardour. Each doing obeisance to the Niṣāda, they marched out, warriors all, eager for the fray; with quivers at their sides and arrows ready on their bows and thoughts on the sandals of Rāma's lotus feet. Girt with breastplates and with helmets on their heads, they sharpened their axes and lances and spears; some were very expert in warding off the sword-stroke and leapt into the air as though they would never return to earth. Each formed his own company and equipment and went to salute Guha the king, who honoured them all by name when he beheld his warriors and deemed them all fighting fit.

[D. 191.] 'Brothers,' he cried, 'fail me not! I have a great work to do today!' and the warriors responded with enthusiasm, 'Have no fear, captain! [C. 192.] Lord, by the power of Rāma and your might we shall leave their army without one soldier or one horse; we shall not give ground while yet we live, but strew the field with heads and trunks!' Looking on his splendid force, the king of the Niṣādas exclaimed, 'Sound the drums of war!' So much he said, and someone sneezed to the left; and the soothsayers

<sup>1</sup> So the *śikā*; others interpret: 'Make ready deadly instruments of warfare.'

<sup>2</sup> Lit., there will be sweets of bliss in both my hands: i.e., if I conquer, I shall have won glory in Rāma's service; if I am defeated, I shall go to be with him in heaven.

said, 'An omen of victory !' But one old man, reflecting on the omen, said, 'Meet Bharat in friendship; there will be no battle. Bharat is going to win Rāma by persuasion; the omen means that there will be no fighting.'

When he heard this, Guha said, 'The old man speaks well; fools act in haste and repent thereafter; if we fight without first finding out Bharat's intentions and being well assured of them, we may be doing much harm instead of good. [D. 192.] Hold the river bank, all ye warriors, in close formation while I go to meet him and discover his intention. When I know whether he comes as friend or foe or neutral, I shall return and plan accordingly. [C. 193.] If he comes in friendship, I shall discover it from his noble temper; for enmity and friendship can in no wise be hid.'

So saying, he began to prepare a present. He sent for bulbs, roots and fruit, birds and deer, with loads of fine fat sheat-fish, which bearers brought in basketsful. When he had made these preparations, he went out to meet him, and fair and auspicious omens attended him on his way. Seeing the lord of sages from afar off, he declared his name and prostrated himself before him. The sage recognized him as Rāma's friend and blessed him and told Bharat who he was. When he heard that he was Rāma's friend, Bharat left his chariot, and dismounting, went forward to greet him with a heart bursting with affection. Guha declared his village, his race and his name and did obeisance with his forehead on the ground.

[D. 193.] When he saw Guha prostrating himself, Bharat clasped him to his bosom. It was as though he were embracing Laksman; his heart could not contain his love. [C. 194.] Bharat embraced him with such sincere affection that everybody enviously praised the expression of his love. 'Blessed, blessed is he !' cried the gods in auspicious tones as they praised him and rained down flowers. 'Him whom the world and the Veda declare to be altogether mean, him the contact with whose shadow involves a ceremonial cleansing, Rāma's younger brother is taking to his heart and embracing with a thrill of rapturous emotion ! Those who in the act of yawning say, "Rāma, Rāma" need not fear the onset of a multitude of sins; and here is one whom Rāma has clasped to his heart, thus sanctifying him and all his family. The water of the Karmanāśa falls into the Gāngā; then tell me, who will not pour it on his head ? And all the world knows that by repeating the Name backwards Vālmiki was made equal to Brahmā. [D. 194.] Cāndāls, Śavaras, Khaśas,

Yavanas, Kols and Kirāts, ignorant and base though they be, by uttering the Name of Rāma become wholly pure and renowned throughout the world. [C. 195.] It is no wonder; it has been so age after age; whom has not Raghubir exalted ?'

Thus did the gods declare the greatness of the Name of Rāma, and the people of Avadh rejoiced as they heard it. Bharat affectionately greeted Rāma's friend and asked after his health and welfare; and when he saw Bharat's loving tenderness, the Niṣāda was there and then beside himself with joy. Ever greater grew his diffidence and love and delight, so that he could only stand gazing fixedly on Bharat. Then gathering courage, he again did homage to his feet and with folded hands made his affectionate response: 'Now that I have seen your blessed lotus feet, I have accounted myself blessed in time past, present and to come. Now, Lord, by your great favour my good fortune is assured for countless generations. [D. 195.] He who worships not the feet of Raghubir, when he considers my mean deeds and lowly race and dwells upon the greatness of the Lord, must be a victim of divine delusion in this world. [C. 196.] Treacherous, cowardly, evil-minded and of low descent, utterly outcast by the world and Vedic law, yet from the day when Rāma made me his own I have become the glory of the world.'

When he beheld his devotion and heard his noble, modest speech, Bharat's younger brother once more embraced him. Then the Niṣāda respectfully declared his name and made courteous obeisance to all the queens. They gave him their blessing as though he were Laksman himself: 'May you live happily,' they said, 'for ten million years !' And when they saw the Niṣāda, the men and women of the city were as pleased as though they were beholding Laksman. 'Here is one,' they said, 'whose life has been crowned with bliss; for Rāma the blessed has folded him in his arms and embraced him.' When the Niṣāda heard them extol his own good fortune, he was overjoyed and took them along with him. [D. 196.] He signed to his servants, and they all, understanding their master's will, went and prepared resting-places in their houses, under the trees, by the ponds and in the gardens and the groves.

[C. 197.] When Bharat saw Śringavera, he was completely overcome by admiration. As he walked on with his hand on the Niṣāda's shoulder, it looked as though Modesty and Love had taken bodily form. In this manner Bharat and all his host came

and beheld the world-purifying Gaṅgā. He did reverence to the spot where Rāma had bathed, and felt as blissful as if Rāma himself had met him. The men and women of the city also did reverence and were delighted to see the divine stream; they bathed and prayed with folded hands for increasing devotion to Rāmacandra's feet, and Bharat said, 'O holy stream, thy sands bring bliss to all and are as the cow of plenty to thy servants; with folded hands I crave this boon, unfeigned affection for the feet of Sitā and Rāma.'

[D. 197.] Thus Bharat bathed, and after receiving the *guru*'s permission and learning that all the queens had bathed, he went on with the camp equipment. [C. 198.] The people pitched their tents here and there and Bharat saw to everybody's comfort. Then after worshipping the gods and taking permission, the two brothers went to visit Rāma's mother. Bharat paid honour to all the queens, rubbing and pressing their feet and speaking many tender words. Then charging his brother with their care, himself summoned the Niṣāda. Hand in hand with his friend he went, faint with excess of love, and asked his comrade, 'Show me the place where Sitā, Rāma and Lakṣman slept at night, and thus assuage a little the fever of my eyes and heart'. As he spoke, his eyes filled with tears. The Niṣāda was distressed at his words and quickly brought him to the spot.

[D. 198.] Where Raghubar had rested beneath the sacred *śīśam* tree, there with the utmost love and reverence Bharat prostrated himself. [C. 199.] When he saw the fair couch of grass, he did obeisance and circled it with ceremonial paces. He placed on his eyes the dust of Rāma's footprints; his exceeding love no tongue can tell. Spying two or three golden spangles, he laid them on his head as though they were Sitā herself. With eyes full of tears and melancholy heart he spoke to his companion in gentle tones: 'Separated from Sitā, these have lost their brilliance and their lustre, just as the men and women of Avadh are wasted with sorrow. To whom can I compare her father, Janak, in whose hands lie the world's delights and the power of spiritual control? Her father-in-law was the monarch, sun of the Solar race, whom even the lord of Amarāvati envied; and the lord of her life is Raghunāth the holy, Rāma, whose greatness alone makes men great. [D. 199.] And if, when I look on the leafy couch of Sitā, jewel of chaste and beauteous wives, my heart breaks not with emotion, then, O Śiva, it is far harder than a thunderbolt!'

[C. 200.] 'No brother like Laksman, young, beautiful and made for love, has ever been or is or will be; dear to the people of the city, the darling of his father and mother, whom Sītā and Raghubir love as their own lives; so delicate of form and gentle of spirit, whose body no hot wind has ever vexed, he suffers every kind of hardship in the forest. This breast of mine is harder than a myriad thunderbolts ! The birth of Rāma has brought radiance to the world, for he is the ocean of beauty, goodness, joy and all perfection. Rāma by his very nature brings happiness to all, to citizens and kinsfolk, *guru*, father and mother. Even his enemies glorify Rāma; his speech, his friendly spirit and his modesty captivate the heart. Not a million Sarasvatīs, not a myriad Śeṣanāgas, can tell the tale of the Lord's perfections. [D. 200.] The jewel of the house of Raghu, Very Bliss, in whom all joy and fortune dwell, strews grass on the ground and sleeps there ! How powerful are the purposes of God !

[C. 201.] 'Rāma had never even heard of pain. The king watched over him like the tree of life. As the eyelid guards the eye, or the serpent its jewel, so did all the queens watch over him day and night. And now he roams the woods afoot, and bulbs, roots, fruit and flowers are his food. Curses on Kaikeyi, from whom this evil fortune springs ! She has become her best-beloved's foe ! And curses, curses on my luckless self, sea of iniquity, on whose account all these disasters have come to pass ! The Creator brought me to birth to shame my house, and my wicked mother has made me the enemy of my Lord !'

But when he heard this plaint, the Niṣāda lovingly protested: 'Why thus despair in vain, my lord ? Rāma is dear to you and you to Rāma. Certain it is that blame rests with an adverse fate.

[Ch. 8.] Cruel is the work of an adverse fate that drove your mother mad ! That night the Lord was constantly speaking of you with reverence and admiration. There is none so dear to Rāma as you—I swear it; be of good cheer, for all will turn out well.

[S. 201.] Rāma knows the hearts of all; in him dwell meekness, love and mercy. Comfort your heart with this assurance, and come, take rest.'

[C. 202.] Hearing his comrade's words, Bharat composed himself and went to his tent with his thoughts on Raghubir. When the men and women of the city heard of Rāma's resting-place, they came with anxious speed to see it. They did reverence to the spot and circled it with ceremonial paces and heaped reproaches on

Kaikeyi. They wept copiously as they cursed the hostility of fate. Some praised Bharat for his affection, and others said the king had proved his love to the full. They blamed themselves and praised the Niṣāda. Who can describe their confusion and distress?

In this manner they all kept vigil through the night, and at daybreak began to cross the river. The *guru* was embarked upon a goodly boat and all the queens on another new one. In an hour and a half all had crossed over, and then Bharat disembarked and attended to them all.

[D. 202.] After performing his morning duties and reverencing his mother's feet and bowing his head before the *guru*, he sent the Niṣādas on ahead and set the host in motion. [C. 203.] He set the king of the Niṣādas in the forefront and then sent forward the palanquins of all the queens; he summoned his younger brother to be their escort; the *guru* travelled with the Brāhmans. He himself did reverence to the Garigā with his thoughts on Sītā, Rāma and Lakṣman. Bharat went on foot, accompanied by riderless horses led by the bridle. His faithful servants repeatedly exclaimed, 'Pray mount your horse, my lord!'; but Bharat replied, 'Rāma set forth on foot, and am I to have chariots, elephants and horses? Rather ought I to walk on my head! For a servant's part should be the hardest.' When they saw Bharat's conduct and heard his gentle words, all the servants were sad and dispirited.

[D. 203.] In the afternoon Bharat entered Prayāga crying, 'Rāma, Sītā, Rāma, Sītā!' in an ecstasy of devotion. [C. 204.] The blisters on his feet glistened like dewdrops on a lotus-bud. The whole company were grieved when they heard that Bharat had travelled that day on foot. When Bharat learnt that everybody had bathed, he came and did obeisance to Triveni; then bathed with due ceremony in the white and dark waters<sup>1</sup> and honoured the Brāhmans with gifts; and as he gazed on the dark and white waves, Bharat trembled with emotion and prayed with folded hands, 'O chief of holy places, that grantest the desires of all, thy power is renowned in the Veda and manifest throughout the whole world! Renouncing my caste-duty, I come as a beggar; for what ill deed will a man not do when in distress? With this in mind wise men who give good gifts answer the prayers of the

<sup>1</sup> *sītāsītā nīra*: where the clear water of the Ganges mingles with the dark and turbid water of the Jumna.

mendicant in this world. [D. 204.] I desire not wealth or spiritual gifts or sensual pleasure, nor do I ask for liberation; only this one boon I crave, devotion to the feet of Rāma in successive lives.

[C. 205.] ‘Though Rāma himself should deem me evil, though the world should call me enemy of my *guru* and my master, yet of thy favour may my love for the feet of Sītā and Rāma grow ever greater day by day. Though the cloud pay no heed to the cuckoo all her life, and when she asks for rain pours down upon her thunderbolts and hail, yet if she cease to importune she will be scorned, and only as her love increases is she honoured; and just as gold is refined by fire, so is the lover who in spite of all fulfils his vow of love to the feet of the beloved.’

In response to Bharat’s prayer there came from the midst of the Triveni a gentle and auspicious voice: ‘Dear Bharat, you are altogether good, and your devotion to the feet of Rāma is unfathomable; you have no reason to be downcast, for no one is as dear to Rāma as you are.’

[D. 205.] When he heard Triveni’s kindly words, Bharat trembled with emotion and his heart was glad. ‘Blessed, blessed is Bharat!’ cried the gods and joyously rained down flowers.

[C. 206.] Those who dwelt at the holy place—anchorites in the forest, students, householders and religious mendicants—were overjoyed, and meeting in small numbers said to one another, ‘Bharat’s love and goodness are true and genuine’. Bharat went to see the great sage Bharadvāja, hearing as he went of Rāma’s many glorious virtues. The sage saw him falling prostrate and thought of him as his own good fortune incarnate. He ran and raised him up and clasped him to his heart and gladdened him with his blessing and gave him a seat; and he bowed his head and sat down, looking as though he would run off and creep into the house of shamefastness, so apprehensive was he that the sage would question him. But perceiving his embarrassment, the sage said, ‘Hearken, Bharat; I have heard all about it; no man can thwart the purposes of God. [D. 206.] So be not downcast when you remember what your mother has done; my son, Kaikeyi is not to blame, for it was Sarasvati who perverted her reason.

[C. 207.] ‘If any say you are to blame, he will not be speaking the truth; for social custom and the Veda are both accepted by the wise, and these will both be honoured, my son, by endorsing your spotless reputation; and it is in accord with custom and the

Veda, and all agree, that he should rule the kingdom to whom his father gives it. Had the king, a man of his word, summoned you to confer on you the sovereignty, all would have been well, right done, and honour preserved; but Rāma's banishment to the forest was the root of all the mischief, and all the world was pained to hear of it. That was fate's decree, and the queen, having worked this ill in her senseless folly, has at the last repented. If any say that herein you are in the least to blame, he is a base creature, senseless and evil. Had you reigned, you would not have been at fault, and Rāma would have been well content to hear of it.

[D. 207.] 'Now, Bharat, you have acted very rightly, and this proposal is worthy of you; for devotion to Rāma's feet is the source of all good fortune in the world; [C. 208.] and this is your wealth, your life, your very being; who so blest as you? Nor is this marvellous in you, my son, who are the son of Daśarath and Rāma's beloved brother. Hearken, Bharat; there is none so close to Raghubar's loving heart as you are. Laksman, Rāma and Sītā spent the whole of that night praising you with the utmost affection. When they were bathing at Prayāga I learnt what was in their mind; they were deeply devoted to you. Raghubar's affection for you is as great as that of a fool for a life of worldly pleasure. And this is nothing unusual in Raghubir, for Raghurāj protects the whole family of one who comes to him for refuge; and you, Bharat, are, as I think, the incarnation of Rāma's love.

[D. 208.] 'That, Bharat, which you hold to be a disgrace is a lesson to all of us; for this event has been a Ganeśa<sup>1</sup> to ensure our success in attaining to the essence of faith in Rāma. [C. 209.] Your stainless glory, my son, is like the new moon, and Rāma's servants are the lilies and the partridges; it will ever be rising and never setting, nor will it wane in the world which is its heaven, but wax greater day by day. The three spheres that are the *cakavī* will regard it with passionate devotion, nor will the sun of the Lord's majesty detract from its brilliance; by night and by day it will ever bring comfort to all and Rāhu—Kaikeyi's evil deed—will not devour it. It is filled with the nectar of Rāma's pure love, nor is it spotted with the stains caused by dishonouring a *guru*;<sup>2</sup> now may the votaries of Rāma drink their fill of nectar, for you have brought it down to earth within the reach of all. King

<sup>1</sup> The worship of Ganeśa at the inauguration of any work ensures success.

<sup>2</sup> See App., s.v. Vṛihaspati.

Bhagiratha brought down the Gaṅgā, the very thought of which opens a store of every kind of blessing. Daśarath's virtues are beyond description; he had no equal in the world; much less was any greater. [D. 209.] For it was due to his love and modest virtue that Rāma was revealed, whom the eyes of Hara's heart are never tired of beholding. [C. 210] But you have created a peerless moon of glory, wherein abides the love of Rāma, looking like a hare.<sup>1</sup> My son, your despondency is all in vain; you have found the philosopher's stone and yet fear poverty! Hearken, Bharat; I speak no falsehood; I am a solitary, an anchorite, and dwell in the forest; the sight of Lakṣman, Rāma and Sītā has been the most glorious fruit of all my pious deeds, and the fruit of that fruit is the sight of you. Most fortunate are both Prayāga and myself! Blessed are you, O Bharat, who have won world-wide fame.' So saying, the saint was overpowered by emotion.

When they heard the sage's words, the whole assembly rejoiced; the gods cried out in praise and showered down blossoms. Cries of 'Blessed, blessed is he!' resounded in the heavens and at Prayāga, and Bharat was in raptures when he heard them. [D. 210.] He trembled with emotion; in his heart were Rāma and Sītā, and tears were in his lotus eyes. He made reverence to the assembly of sages and addressed them with faltering voice:

[C. 211.] 'In this assembly of sages and holiest of places it were the most heinous of sins to swear even to the truth. If in this place the least pretence were made, no sin or vileness could be greater. You are all-wise—I speak in all sincerity—and Raghurāo knows the secrets of the heart; it is not my mother's deed that troubles me, nor do I grieve that the world will deem me base; nor do I fear the loss of heaven or mourn my father's death; his merit and fair fame are renowned throughout the world; he had such sons as Rāma and Lakṣman, and abandoned his frail body when parted from Rāma—why should I mourn for the king? No; it is because Rāma, Lakṣman and Sītā are wandering through the woods, with feet unshod and clad in hermit's dress, [D. 211.] wearing deerskins, eating fruit, and sleeping on the ground strewn with grass and leaves, resting beneath trees, and ever enduring cold and heat and rain and wind [C. 212.]—it is this burning pain that ceaselessly consumes my breast so that I can neither eat by

<sup>1</sup> *mṛigarūpa*; *mṛiga* is specially used for nine wild animals, of which one is *sāsa*, a hare. Hindus think of our 'man in the moon' as a hare.

day nor sleep at night. There is no medicine for this fell sickness; I have searched the whole world over in my thoughts. My mother's evil design, the source of all this mischief, was the carpenter who fashioned an adze out of my interests, and with the evil wood of jealousy wrought an evil instrument, and fixed it with the cruel, evil spell of the period of Rāma's banishment. For my sake she fashioned this evil contrivance and ruined and confounded the whole world. These evil times will come to an end when Rāma returns, and only then will Avadh be established; there is no other way.'

The sage was pleased with Bharat's words, and everyone applauded them. 'Grieve not overmuch, my son,' said the sage; 'when you see Rāma's feet, all your sorrow will be at an end.' [D. 212.] Thus did the great sage comfort him, and added, 'Be ye now our beloved guests, and graciously accept the bulbs and roots and fruit and flowers that we can offer.'

[C. 213.] Bharat was troubled at heart by the sage's invitation, for this was not a suitable time and yet it would be rude to hesitate. Then, reflecting that a *guru*'s word should outweigh his scruples, he did homage to his feet and said with folded hands, 'Obedience to your command, my lord, is my highest duty'. Bharat's reply pleased the high sage, and he summoned to him trustworthy servants and disciples. 'We must show hospitality to Bharat,' he said; 'go and bring bulbs and roots and fruit.' 'Very well, master,' they said, and bowed; and each went off very cheerfully to perform his appointed task. The sage thought, 'I have invited an important guest; I must entertain him as I would a god'. At his word Anīmā and the rest of Kuvera's attendants<sup>1</sup> came and said, 'Give us your commands, holy master, and we obey!' [D. 213.] Gladly replied the royal sage, 'Bharat and his brother and all their company are distressed by separation from Rāma; show them hospitality and ease them of their weariness.'

[C. 214.] The spirits obeyed the sage's commands and deemed themselves most fortunate. They were all saying to one another, 'Rāma's younger brother is a peerless guest! So we must do homage to the sage's feet and perform our task today in such a way that the whole royal company may be pleased.' With these words they fashioned a number of houses, more beautiful far than celestial chariots; and they furnished them with such luxury and

<sup>1</sup> See notes on B.C. 22 and B.C. 303.

splendour that the very immortals beheld them with longing eyes. Handmaidens and men-servants brought all that was needed and attentively provided what each desired. All the comforts that are not even dreamed of in heaven the spirits supplied in a moment, and first they provided each guest with quarters, elegant and comfortable and just as each desired. [D. 214.] Then, as the seer had ordered, apartments were assigned to Bharat and his household, and the great sage astonished the Creator by the mighty power his penance could command.

[C. 215.] When Bharat beheld the sage's power, the spheres of all the rulers of the spheres seemed to him as little worth. The pleasures provided were beyond description; even the wise forgot their continence when they beheld them. There were thrones and couches, fair raiment and canopies, groves and gardens with birds and beasts of every kind; sweet-scented flowers and ambrosial fruits, ponds, wells and lakes of limpid water; drink, too, and food as pure as nectar and ambrosia, which people shrank from looking on, as though they were ascetics; for each his cow of plenty and tree of Paradise, the very sight of which made Indra and Śaci envious. The season was spring; mild, cool and fragrant breezes blew; the four rewards were accessible to all, and all such delights as garlands, sandalwood and women, which people saw with mingled feelings of joy and dismay.<sup>1</sup> [D. 215.] Luxury was the cakavī and Bharat the cakavā, and the sage's command the fowler that had shut them up together that night in the cage of the hermitage till daybreak.<sup>2</sup>

[C. 216.] Then Bharat bathed at Prayāga and with all his company bowed his head before the sage. Receiving the seer's blessing and permission to depart, he prostrated himself with many humble prayers. Taking guides familiar with the road, he set out with all his company, his thoughts directed towards Citrakūṭa. With his hand on the shoulder of Rāma's friend he walked on like Love incarnate. With nothing to protect his feet or shade his head, his love and constancy to his religious vows were most unfeigned. He asked his companion to tell him of the travels of Lakṣman, Rāma and Sītā, and in gentle tones he told the story.

<sup>1</sup> *bisamaya*: dismay rather than astonishment; for, as the commentators explain, they feared they might forget their vows of abstinence.

<sup>2</sup> The cakavā and his mate are doomed to separation by night, and even when imprisoned in one cage cannot mate. So Bharat was compelled to be abstinent in the midst of so much luxury.

When he saw the places and the trees where Rāma had rested, his heart could not contain his devotion; and when they saw his plight, the gods rained down flowers, the earth became soft and the road a path of blessing. [D. 216.] The clouds gave shade, a refreshing breeze sprang up; the road had not been so pleasant for Rāma as it was for Bharat's journey.

[C. 217.] All created things, dead or alive, that had seen the Lord on his journey or had been seen by him had been made heirs of salvation, and now the sight of Bharat delivered them from the curse of rebirth; and yet this was no hard task for Bharat, for Rāma was ever bearing him in mind. A man who in this world utters the Name of Rāma but once becomes saved himself and a saviour of others; moreover, Bharat was Rāma's beloved and his younger brother; then how should not the road bring him every blessing? So said adepts and holy men and great sages, and rejoiced with heartfelt joy when they saw him.

But when the king of heaven marked his power, he was disturbed and thought, 'The world seems good to the good and bad to the bad!' He said to his *guru*, 'Pray, lord, devise some means to prevent a meeting between Rāma and Bharat. [D. 217.] Rāma is modest and affectionate and Bharat a very ocean of love. The scheme I have devised is like to be upset, so do your best to think out some guileful stratagem.'

[C. 218.] At this the *guru* of the gods smiled, thinking the king to be but blind for all his thousand eyes. 'O king of heaven,' he replied, 'illusion practised on a servant of illusion's lord recoils on one's own head. I practised it once, knowing it was Rāma's will, but now deceitful action will only work mischief. Harken, O king of heaven; it is Raghunāth's nature never to be angry at a wrong done to himself; but one who wrongs his votary is consumed in the fire of Rāma's wrath. There are well-known stories, both secular and scriptural, to prove it; Durvāsā knows well the power of his vengeance. And who so dear to Rāma as Bharat? The world repeats the Name of Rāma, and Rāma the Name of Bharat. [D. 218.] So think not, O king of the immortals, to injure a votary of Raghubar; it would but mean dishonour in the world and sorrow in heaven and an ever-increasing burden of remorse.'

[C. 219.] 'Listen, king of the gods, to my instruction. A servant is above all dear to Rāma, and he is pleased when one serves his servant and bitterly hostile to his servant's foe. Though he be impartial, feeling neither desire nor anger, regarding not merit

or demerit, virtue or defect, and has appointed fate the sovereign of the universe, so that as a man sows he reaps, yet does he play at partiality according as hearts are faithful or unfaithful. Rāma is impersonal, undefiled, infinite and immutable, yet for love of his votaries has he taken personal form. Rāma has ever regarded the desires of his servants, as Veda and Purāṇa and holy men and gods bear witness. Thus reflect and abandon crooked ways and practise meet devotion to the feet of Bharat.

[D. 219.] 'Rāma's faithful servants are devoted to the good of others and sorrow when they sorrow, full of compassion; and Bharat is the chief of votaries. [C. 220.] Fear him not, O king of heaven! The Lord is true to his word and a friend of the gods, and Bharat is obedient to Rāma's commands. It is your selfish fear that disquiets you; Bharat is not to blame; it is your folly!' The great god was pleased when he heard the words of the divine *guru* and ceased to despond. Joyously the heavenly king began to rain down flowers and magnify the goodness of Bharat.

Thus did Bharat proceed on his journey while sages and adepts beheld his rapture and enviously praised him. Whenever he sighed with Rāma's name upon his lips, it was as though Love welled forth on every side. At the sound of his words thunderbolts and rocks melted. None can describe the citizens' devotion. Encamping on the way, he came to the Yamunā, and when he gazed upon its waters, his eyes filled with tears. [D. 220.] When he and his host beheld the lovely water, dark as Raghubar, he sank into a sea of desolation till he mounted the boat of discernment.

[C. 221.] That day they halted on the bank of the Yamunā and due provision was made for all. In the night boats arrived from the various *ghāṭas*, so many that they could not be counted. At daybreak the crossing was made in a single journey, and everyone was pleased with the service Rāma's friend had done them. Then, after bathing and bowing to the river, the two brothers went on their way with the king of the Niṣādas. In front went the great sages, riding in their splendid carriages; and behind them all the royal retinue; last of all, the two brothers, on foot and dressed in very simple ornaments and raiment. With them went their servants and friends and the sons of the ministers, with their thoughts on Lakṣman, Sītā and Raghunāth; and wherever Rāma had stayed or rested, there they did loving reverence.

[D. 221.] Men and women who dwelt by the road left their homes and their business when they heard of their arrival and

ran out to see them; and when they beheld their beauty and their love, they rejoiced, for they had achieved their life's ambition. [C. 222.] All the women were saying to one another in affectionate tones, 'Are these Rāma and Lakṣman, sister, or not? Their age and bodily form and hue and beauty, friend, are the same, and they are like them, too, in their loving character.' 'But,' said one, 'they are not dressed like them, sister, nor is Sītā with them; and before them marches an army with the four divisions; nor are their faces cheerful, but there is sorrow in their hearts. So, maiden, this difference leads me to doubt.' The women were convinced by her arguments and they all said, 'There is no one so discerning as she!'

Another woman praised her and confirmed the soundness of her judgement. Speaking in gentle tones, she lovingly told the whole story, how Rāma's hopes of the delights of sovereignty had been frustrated. She then began to sing Bharat's praises for his loving nature and happy disposition. [D. 222.] 'He has abandoned the kingdom his father gave him and goes on foot, with only fruit to sustain him, to persuade Raghubar to return. Who in these times is like Bharat? [C. 223.] The telling and hearing of Bharat's brotherly love and devotion and model conduct is enough to dispel sorrow and sin. Whatever one may say about him, sister, is all too little; he is Rāma's brother and must be what he is. All we who have seen Bharat and his brother have been accounted blessed among women.' When they heard of his virtues and beheld his piteous plight, they lamented and said, 'He should not be the son of such a mother as Kaikeyi!' One said, 'The queen is not to blame; it is all the work of fate, and fate is kind to us; for who are we, unrecognized by society and the Veda, women of base birth and unworthy conduct, wretched females living in a poor village in the wilds, that we should enjoy a vision that crowns the highest merit?' Such were the joy and wonder in every village, as though the tree of Paradise had sprung up in the desert.

[D. 223.] Fortunate indeed were those who dwelt by the road to enjoy the sight of Bharat, as though by good chance Prayāga had become accessible to those who lived at Lankā.

[C. 224.] Thus with his own virtues and the tale of Rāma's perfections sounding in his ears, Bharat travelled on, meditating on Raghunāth. When he saw a holy place, he bathed, and when he saw a sage's hermitage or a temple, he did obeisance; and inwardly he prayed for the boon of devotion to the lotus feet of Sītā

and Rāma. There met him on the way Kirāts and Kols who dwelt in the forest, anchorites, too, and students, ascetics and solitaries. Greeting them with reverence, he asked this one and that in what wood Laksman and Rāma and the princess of Videha might be found. They told him all the tidings of the Lord, and the sight of Bharat crowned their lives with bliss. Those who told him they had seen them safe and well he accounted as dear to him as Rāma and Laksman. So he went on, making courteous inquiry of all and listening to the story of Rāma's life in the forest.

[D. 224.] That day he halted, and early the next morning he went on, thinking on Raghunāth; and all his companions were as eager to see Rāma as Bharat himself. [C. 225.] All met with favourable omens; eyes and arms throbbed propitiously. Bharat and all his retinue were filled with joyous expectation that they would see Rāma and that their consuming grief would be allayed. Each formed his own desire; they all marched on, drunk with the wine of love; their limbs grew faint, they staggered as they walked, emotion made their voices inarticulate.

Just then Rāma's friend pointed out a rocky hill, crowning the scene with its great natural beauty, near to which, on the bank of the Payasvini, the two heroes and Sītā had made their home. When they saw it, they all fell prostrate on the ground, crying, 'Glory to Rāma, the life of Jānaki!' The royal company was as over-powered by emotion as though Raghurāja had returned to Avadh.

[D. 225.] Not even Śeṣa can describe the extent of Bharat's loving emotion at that moment. A poet can no more approach the theme than men obsessed with selfish thoughts can hope for heaven's bliss. [C. 226.] All were so exhausted by their love for Raghubar that they travelled only four miles by sunset and halted when they spied dry land for their encampment with water at hand. When night was past, Raghunāth's beloved brother set out again.

Meanwhile, Rāma awoke while it was still night, and Sītā told him a dream she had dreamed: 'It seemed to me that Bharat had come with a host and was burning with a fever caused by separation from his lord. All were dejected, miserable and sad, and I saw that the queens were changed in appearance.' When he heard Sītā's dream, his eyes filled with tears, and he who frees from all sorrow became a prey to sorrow. 'Laksman,' he said, 'this dream bodes no good; it will be the harbinger of some dreadful tidings'.

So saying, he and his brother bathed, worshipped Purāṇi and paid honour to the saints.

[Ch. 9.] Paying honour to the gods and doing homage to the sages, he sat down and looked towards the north. The sky was hidden in a cloud of dust, and many birds and beasts were fleeing in disquiet to the Lord's retreat. He got up when he saw it and wondered what this might mean; and at that moment Kirāts and Kols came and told him all the news.

[S. 226.] When he heard the happy tidings, he rejoiced and trembled with delight; and his eyes that were like the autumn lotus filled with tears of love.

[C. 227.] Then again, while Sītā's lord was anxiously wondering why Bharat had come, one came and said, 'He has with him a great army of horses, elephants, chariots and foot'. Rāma was greatly disturbed by the news; on the one hand, there was his father's promise, and on the other, consideration for his brother. Pondering on Bharat's nature, the Lord found no sure ground on which his thoughts might take their stand. Then he consoled himself with the thought that Bharat was good and prudent and obedient to his will.

Laksman saw that the Lord was disquieted at heart and suggested the policy which he thought the occasion required: 'I would say somewhat, my lord, without being asked; but there are times when a servant's presumption is not presumptuous. You, master, are chief among the omniscient; I, your servant, speak as I think. [D. 227.] Lord, you are kindly and very simple-hearted, a treasure-house of charity and love. You extend your love and trust to all, and believe all to be like yourself. [C. 228.] A worldly man becomes infatuated when he gains power and foolishly betrays his true nature. Bharat was upright and pious and wise and devoted to the feet of his Lord, as all the world knows; but now that same Bharat, having succeeded to the throne that was Rāma's has come here with no regard for the bounds of duty. A treacherous and wicked brother, he has chosen this evil opportunity when he knows that Rāma is all alone in the forest, and gathering together an army with evil intent, has come to make his sovereignty secure. Countless crooked schemes have the two brothers devised, and have assembled their host and come. If there were no treachery and wicked intent in his heart, why should he want to bring all these chariots and horses and elephants? But why

blame Bharat needlessly? All the world goes mad when sovereignty is won.

[D. 228.] 'The moon seduced the *guru*'s wife, Nahuṣa rode in a litter borne by Brāhmans, and Vena was lowest of the low, who defied social custom and the *Veda*. [C. 229.] Sahasrabāhu, Indra, Triśanku—who has not erred when drunk with sovereign power? This is a clever plan that Bharat has made, not to leave himself an enemy or shadow of obligation anywhere. But there's one point where Bharat has not been quite so clever, in scorning Rāma as if he had no helper; and he'll find out his mistake today, and no doubt about it, when he sees Rāma's furious face in the battle!' So much he said, forgetting diplomacy, and in his excitement up sprang the tree of pugnacity. He touched his Lord's feet, and placing their dust upon his head, cried in accents of sincere, spontaneous vehemence, 'My lord, think not my words unseemly; Bharat has sorely provoked me; how long must I endure, how long control myself, seeing my lord is with me and my bow in my hand?' [D. 229.] I am of warrior caste, born in the house of Raghu, and Rāma's faithful servant, as all the world knows! What is so low as the dust? Yet it rises when it is kicked and falls upon the head.'

[C. 230.] He rose and with folded hands sought permission, looking like Heroism aroused from sleep. Binding his hair into a knot and girding on his quiver by his side, with bow and arrows ready in his hands, he cried, 'Today I shall win glory as Rāma's servant and teach Bharat a lesson on the battle-field. Both brothers shall reap the reward of contempt for Rāma and sleep on the couch of war. Well is it that the whole host has come; I shall manifest this day the wrath I once displayed, and as a lion rends a herd of elephants, or a hawk carries off a quail in its clutches, so shall I contemptuously hurl Bharat to the ground with his brother and his army. Even though Śaṅkara should come to their aid, in the name of Rāma I would vanquish him in battle!'

[D. 230.] When they beheld Laksman's furious indignation and heard his solemn oath, the spheres and all their rulers were afraid and would have fled in terror. The world was panic-stricken.

[C. 231.] Then came a voice from heaven, magnifying the mighty strength of Laksman's arm: 'Who can know or tell, my son, your power and might? But when work is to be done, one should weigh carefully the right and wrong, and all will speak

well of it. The Veda and the wise agree that those who act in haste and afterwards repent are foolish.'

When he heard the voice from heaven, Lakṣman was abashed, and Rāma and Sitā addressed him courteously: 'Brother, your words are words of wisdom, for there is no such heady intoxication as that of sovereignty. Those kings who have not enjoyed the society of the good are maddened by a mere taste of it. But listen, Lakṣman; so good a man as Bharat has not been seen or heard of in all God's creation. [D. 231.] Bharat would never be drunk with sovereign power, though he should sit upon the throne of Brahmā, Hari and Hara. Can the Ocean of Milk be curdled by drops of sour gruel? [C. 232.] Sooner may darkness swallow the mid-day sun at noon, sooner may ether mingle with the clouds and be absorbed, sooner may Agastya be drowned in a puddle, or earth abandon her natural forbearance, sooner may Mount Meru be blown away by the breath of a mosquito than Bharat, brother, suffer from pride of sovereignty. Lakṣman, I swear by yourself, I take my oath by our father, there is no brother so true and single-minded as Bharat. When God created the world, dear brother, he mingled the milk of virtue with the water of sin; and Bharat was born as a swan in the lake of the Solar line to separate the evil from the good. He chose the milk of virtue and cast from him the water of vice and by his glory brought light to the world.' While he thus spoke of Bharat's virtue and native goodness, Raghurāī lost himself in the ocean of love.

[D. 232.] When they heard what Raghubar said and beheld the love he bore to Bharat, the gods all sang his praises: 'What Lord is there so merciful as Rāma? [C. 233.] If Bharat had not been born into the world, who would have upheld all righteousness upon the earth? Who but yourself, O Raghunāth, can know the tale of Bharat's virtues that surpass all poets' comprehension?' When they heard the gods thus speaking, Lakṣman, Rāma and Sitā were filled with ineffable joy.

Meanwhile, Bharat and all his retinue bathed in Mandākini's pure stream. Then halting all the people by the river and asking permission of his mother and his *guru* and his minister, Bharat went on with the king of the Niśādas and his younger brother to the place where Sitā and Raghurāī had their home. But when he remembered his mother's deed, he was ashamed and indulged in a myriad apprehensive fancies. 'Perhaps,' he thought, 'Rāma and Lakṣman and Sitā may arise when they hear my name and leave

this place and go elsewhere. [D. 233.] If he believes me to have plotted with my mother, then all he may do is but little; but for his honour's sake he will pardon my sins and offences and receive me with kindness. [C. 234.] Yet, whether he disown me as a villain or honour me as a servant, my refuge is at Rāma's sandals. Rāma is my dear master, the fault is all his servant's. The cuckoo and the fish are famous throughout the world for the constant renewal of their vows of faithfulness and love.' So reflecting, he went on his way, his whole being faint with love and diffidence. His mother's sin seemed to turn him back, yet spurred on by the power of devotion he went resolutely forward. When he remembered Raghunāth's loving nature, his feet made haste along the road. Bharat's state at that time was that of a water-fly borne on the current of the stream; and when he beheld Bharat's anxiety and devotion, the Niṣāda was beside himself with pity. [D. 234.] Auspicious omens began to occur, and when the Niṣāda heard them and pondered them, he said, 'There will be an end of sorrow and a beginning of joy; but again at the last there will be distress.'

[C. 235.] Bharat knew all his attendant's words to be true. He went on and drew near to the hermitage, and when he saw the woods and many hills, he was as glad as a hungry man enjoying good food. Bharat's feelings were just like those of a people afflicted with the fear of disastrous visitations,<sup>1</sup> suffering torments of body and soul, misfortune and pestilence, when they come to a land well-governed and prosperous and are happy. The forest where Rāma dwelt flourished as happily as a people who are ruled by a good king. Detachment was its minister, Sound Judgement its sovereign, whose holy realm was the beautiful forest; Moral Principle and Religious Rule were his warriors, and the hills his capital; Peace and Good Sense his pure and lovely queens; a good king, furnished with all the realm required<sup>2</sup> and happy in the shelter of Rāma's feet. [D. 235.] Sound Judgement, the monarch, having conquered king Folly with all his hosts, held undisputed sway; and in his city were joy, prosperity and happiness. [C. 236.] All the many dwellings of the hermits in the woodland province

<sup>1</sup> *śi*: a comprehensive term for severe calamities, viz. flood, drought, rats, locusts, parrots, invasion and tyranny.

<sup>2</sup> *anīga sāmparṇa*: the following are reckoned as the seven 'members' of a kingdom: the king, the realm, the minister, the army, the fortress, the treasury and friends.

were as his cities and towns and villages and hamlets, and the many various birds and beasts were his countless subjects; and when one saw the rhinoceroses, elephants, lions, tigers and boars, buffaloes and bullocks, one could not but praise the royal appointments. They laid aside their natural enmity and everywhere grazed together like an army with its four divisions. Torrents poured down and wild elephants trumpeted, and their sound was like the music of all kinds of instrument; *cakarūs*, partridges, cuckoos, parrots, koels and graceful swans made joyful melody. Bees hummed and peacocks danced, as though in that happy realm joy held universal sway; and there were creepers, trees and grasses, with flowers and fruit, and all these together were a source of happiness and bliss.

[D. 236.] When he beheld the beauty of Rāma's hill, Bharat's heart was filled with love, as an ascetic rejoices when his vow is fulfilled and he reaps the reward of his penance.

[C. 237.] Then Guha the boatman ran up on a height, and stretching out his arm, said to Bharat, 'Yonder, lord, appear lofty trees—fig, rose-apple, mango and *tamāla*—and in the midst of those noble trees there stands a lovely banyan, fine and spreading and glorious to behold. Dense and dark blue are its leaves and red its fruit, and its close foliage affords a pleasant shade at all seasons of the year; a mass of darkness and redness, as though God had assembled all that was beautiful to fashion it. These trees, master, are near the river and there Raghubar's hut of leaves is roofed; and there, too, are many lovely *tulasi* shrubs, planted some by Sitā and some by Lakṣman; and in the banyan's shade Sitā with her own lotus hands has built a beauteous altar. [D. 237.] There the all-wise Sitā and Rāma constantly sit with the hermits and listen to all the stories and legends of the Vedas and Āgamas and Purāṇas.'

[C. 238.] When Bharat heard his comrade's words and saw the trees, his eyes overflowed with tears. The two brothers did obeisance as they advanced; Sarasvati herself would find it hard to describe their devotion. When they beheld the prints of Rāma's feet, they rejoiced like some beggar who finds the philosopher's stone. They cast the dust upon their heads and applied it to their hearts and eyes, as glad as if they had met Raghubar himself. Seeing Bharat's utterly indescribable condition, birds, beasts and all created things lost themselves in love. Overpowered by devotion, his companion lost the way, but the gods showed him the

best road and rained down flowers. Adepts and aspirants gazed on him in ecstasy and forthwith praised his true devotion: 'If Bharat's love had not appeared on earth, who would have made the foolish sensible or the sensible foolish ?' [D. 238.] Raghubīr, the gracious Lord, has churned the deep sea, Bharat, with the Mandara of separation, and for the sake of gods and saints has brought to light the nectar of love !'

[C. 239.] Owing to the dense shade of the forest Laksman could not see the charming pair and their companion, but Bharat saw the Lord's pure hermitage, fair home of perfect bliss. As soon as he entered it, the fire of his grief was extinguished; he was like an ascetic who has won to highest truth. Bharat saw that Laksman was standing before the Lord, answering his questions in loving tones. His hair was knotted on his head and hermit's raiment girt about his loins; a quiver hung at his side, arrows were in his hand and a bow on his shoulder. By the altar was a company of hermits and holy men, and resplendent with Sītā beside him Raghurāja, clad in bark with knotted hair, dark of hue, as though Rati and Kāmadeva had taken hermit guise. In his lotus hand he turned about his bow and arrows, and with his smiling glance healed the fevered anguish of the heart. [D. 239.] In the midst of the glorious circle of hermits Sītā and Raghucanda shone forth like Faith and the Absolute incarnate in the council-hall of Knowledge.

[C. 240.] With his younger brother and his friend Bharat stood lost in contemplation, forgetful of joy and sadness, pain and pleasure. Then, 'Save me, Lord ! Save me, O holy one !' he cried, and fell prostrate to the earth. Affectionately Laksman recognized his voice and knew that it was Bharat who did obeisance. On the one hand, he was moved by deep love for his brother; on the other, strongly bound by the duty of service to his Lord. He could neither greet him nor remain aloof. Only a skilled poet can describe the state of Laksman's mind; like a child at play who pulls down his kite when it flies on high he stood, giving weight to his duty. Lovingly he bowed his head to the ground and said, 'Bharat is doing obeisance, Raghunāth'. At these words Rāma arose in affectionate haste, and off in all directions flew his robe,

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat obscure eulogy. Some commentators explain that it was Bharat's devotion that roused the senseless gods to show them the way, and so stupefied the ordinarily sensible Guha that he lost it. The first clause might be translated: 'If Bharat had not been born into the world.'

his quiver, his arrows and his bow. [D. 240.] The gracious Lord raised him perforce and clasped him to his breast, and all who saw the meeting of Rāma and Bharat lost consciousness of self.

[C. 241.] How can the love they felt at meeting be described —love wholly beyond the power of any poet to express? The two brothers were filled with the most perfect affection; mind, reason, understanding, nay, their very selves were all forgotten. Tell me, who can express such wondrous love? What poet's mind can grasp even the shadow of it? A poet relies for true portrayal on words and their sense; dancers dance to an accompaniment; but the love of Bharat and Raghubar is incomprehensible; not even Brahmā, Hari and Hara can conceive it. Then how can my poor wit express it? Can sweet melody be made on an instrument strung with grass?

When they saw the meeting of Bharat and Raghubar, the gods trembled with alarm; but their *guru* admonished them and they awoke from their folly and rained down flowers and sang praises.

[D. 241.] Rāma affectionately embraced Śatrughna and greeted the boatman; and Lakṣman greeted Bharat very lovingly and did obeisance. [C. 242.] Lakṣman fondly embraced his younger brother and then clasped the Niṣāda to his heart. Next, the two brothers did homage to the hermits and rejoiced to receive from them the blessing they desired. Then Bharat and his brother in an ecstasy of love placed on their heads the dust of Sītā's lotus feet and again and again did obeisance; but Sītā raised them up, and touching their heads with her lotus hands, made them be seated. Silently Sītā blessed them, for her love so absorbed her that she lost her conscious self. When Bharat saw that Sītā was so graciously inclined, he ceased to be anxious and was no more apprehensive. No one said anything, no one put a question, for their souls were so full of love that they lost the power to function. Then the boatman plucked up courage, and bowing with folded hands said humbly, [D. 242.] 'Lord, all the queens and the people of the city, the servants, the captains and the ministers of state, distressed by their bereavement, have come here together with the lord of sages.'

[C. 243.] When Rāma, the sum of loving-kindness, steadfast upholder of righteousness, who has pity on the humble, heard that his *guru* had arrived, he left Śatrughna with Sītā and at once hastened to greet him; and when the Lord and his brother saw the *guru*, they were overjoyed and fell prostrate before him; but the

great sage ran and clasped the two brothers to his bosom and rapturously embraced them. Trembling with emotion, the boatman gave his name and prostrated himself afar off, but the seer embraced him, whether he would or no, as Rāma's friend, as though he had gathered up Love fallen on the ground. 'Faith in Raghupati is the source of all blessing!' So sang the gods in praise from heaven and rained down flowers. 'Nowhere in the world is one so mean as he nor one so great as Vasiṣṭha; [D. 243.] yet, when he saw him, the lord of sages embraced him more gladly than even Lakṣman; so powerfully manifest is the influence of faith in Sītā's lord!'

[C. 244.] When Rāma the compassionate, the wise and blessed Lord, perceived that all the people were distressed, he fulfilled with friendly regard the wishes of all in the manner each desired. In a moment he and his brother embraced them all and relieved the burning torment of their pain; and this was no hard task for Rāma; so, too, the one sun is reflected in a myriad water-jars. Rapturously all the citizens embraced the boatman and praised his good fortune. When Rāma saw that the queens were sad like sprays of a lovely creeper smitten by the frost, first of all he embraced Kaikeyī, inclining her to gentler thoughts by his sincerity and devotion; then, falling at her feet, he comforted her, laying all the blame on fate and destiny and providence. [D. 244.] Raghubar embraced all the queens and comforted them and consoled them, saying, 'Mother, the world is ruled by God; blame no one'.

[C. 245.] Then the two brothers did homage to the feet of the *guru*'s wife and to the wives of the Brāhmans who had accompanied Bharat. They paid honour to them all as to Gaṅgā and Gaurī; happily the women blessed them in gentle tones. They touched Sumitrā's feet and were clasped to her bosom, as though some destitute beggar had come upon a fortune. Then the two brothers fell at their mother's feet, altogether enraptured. Their mother clasped them passionately to her heart and bathed them with tears of love from her eyes. How can a poet describe the joy and sadness of that hour any more than a dumb man can describe a pleasant taste? Having embraced their mother, Raghurāū and his brother asked the *guru* to go with them, and the citizens, with the permission of the high sage, passed on, viewing land and water as they went.

[D. 245.] Taking with them the Brāhmans, the minister, the queens, the *guru* and others chosen from the people, Bharat, Lakṣman and Raghunāth went to the holy retreat. [C. 246.] Sītā came and touched the great sage's feet and received, as was meet, the blessing she desired. Then she embraced the *guru*'s wife and the wives of the sages with inexpressible affection. Sītā did reverence to the feet of each in turn and received the words of blessing that rejoiced her heart. When Sītā beheld all the queens, she closed her eyes and delicately shuddered, for they seemed to her like swans fallen into the fowler's power;<sup>1</sup> what is this, she thought, that a cruel Creator has done? And as they looked at Sītā, they were deeply grieved; all must be endured, they thought, that fate imposes. Then Sītā, Janak's daughter, took courage and with dark lotus eyes full of tears she went and embraced all the queens. At that hour Pity prevailed upon the earth.

[D. 246.] Sītā touched the feet of each in turn and embraced them with the utmost affection; and they lovingly blessed her from their hearts: 'Ever remain a happy wedded wife!'

[C. 247.] While Sītā and all the queens were thus affectionately distraught, the learned *guru* bade them all be seated. Then the lord of sages spoke of the impermanent nature of the world and expounded a little of the highest reality and told them of the king's decease. When Raghunāth heard it, he was sore distressed, for he thought that love for him had caused his father's death; sadly moved was the staunch and steadfast Rāma. On hearing the bitter tidings, cruel as a thunderbolt, Lakṣman, Sītā and all the queens lamented, and the whole company was as grieved as though the king had died that day. Then the great sage comforted Rāma, and with the whole company he bathed in the sacred river. On that day the Lord took a vow to refrain from drinking water, and even though the sage bade them drink, no one would do so.

[D. 247.] Early on the following morning the Lord Raghunandan reverently performed all his duties as the sage directed him, with faith and devotion. [C. 248.] He celebrated his father's funeral rites as prescribed in the Vedas, and became pure—he, the sun who puts to flight the darkness of sin, whose name is a fire to burn up the cotton of iniquity, and its remembrance the source of every

<sup>1</sup> Because they looked so sad. The lines can alternatively mean that the queens were shocked at the sight of Sītā, but the following verse makes the former rendering more probable.

blessing; he became pure—so saints agree—as Gaṅgā is purified by the invocation of holy places.

Two days passed after his purification, and then Rāma affectionately addressed the *guru*: ‘Lord, all the people are in very sad plight; they are taking only bulbs and roots and fruit and water. When I look at Bharat and his brother, the ministers and all the queens, a moment seems to me to pass like an age. Pray set out with them all for the city; you are here and the king in heaven. I have said enough and presumed too greatly; so act, holy master, as seems good to you.’

[D. 248.] ‘O Rāma,’ replied the *guru*, ‘perfectly righteous, home of compassion, it is like you to suggest it. But the people are wearied, let them take rest for two days and enjoy the sight of you.’

[C. 249.] The whole company had been panic-stricken by Rāma’s proposal, like a ship in distress on the ocean; but when they heard the *guru*’s speech that promised so great happiness, it was as though the wind had become favourable. Three times a day they bathed in the sacred Payasvini, the very sight of which destroys all sin; and they feasted their eyes continually on the image of bliss, gazing joyfully on him with repeated prostrations. They went to see Rāma’s hill and wood, where all was pleasure and no pain; where flowed cascades of ambrosial water, and winds, soft, cool and fragrant, healed the mind and body of every kind of pain. There, too, were trees and creepers and grasses of countless kinds, and fruit and flowers and leaves in great variety; splendid boulders and grateful shade beneath the trees—who can describe the beauty of the wood? [D. 249.] Lotuses were growing in the ponds; water-fowl were uttering their notes and bees were humming; beasts roamed the forest, and birds of varied hue, in friendly intercourse.

[C. 250.] The Kols, Kirāts and Bhils who dwelt in the forest brought pure, delicious honey, sweet as nectar, and filling leaf-plates, daintily sewn, with bulbs and roots and fruit and shoots in bundles,<sup>1</sup> offered them to all, doing humble obeisance and explaining their taste and variety and quality and name. The people would have paid for them handsomely, but they would not accept the money but returned it in the name of Rāma, gently protesting with the utmost affection. ‘Good men respect love when they see it. You are virtuous and we are mean Niṣādas; only by

<sup>1</sup> *jūrī*: or, edible tuberous roots.

the grace of Rāma have we been honoured by the sight of you, a vision as hard for us to win as for the desert to be watered by Gaṅgā. Rāma the gracious has shown favour to the Niśādas; as is the king, so should be his household and his subjects. [D. 250.] Consider this and think no shame to look upon our love and show us favour; and make us well content by accepting our fruit and herbs and shoots. [C. 251.] You have come into the forest as welcome guests; we are all unworthy to do you service. What, masters, shall we give you? A Kirāt can only show his friendship by gifts of fuel and leaves! Indeed, it is a very true piece of service on our part that we do not make off with your clothes and vessels! Brutish creatures are we, and slayers of creatures too, base-born, perverse and evil in all our ways and thoughts. We spend our days and nights in doing wrong, and yet we have no clothes to cover our bodies, no food to satisfy our hunger. How, then, could righteousness ever have entered our thoughts save only by the virtue of the vision of Raghunandan? Ever since we beheld the Lord's lotus feet there has been an end to our intolerable woe and wickedness.'

When they heard these words, the citizens were enraptured and began to extol their good fortune. [Ch. 10.] All began to praise their good fortune and addressed them lovingly; they were delighted to hear their friendly welcome and mark their devotion to the feet of Sītā and Rāma. Men and women thought nothing of their own love when they heard the words of the Kols and the Bhils; it is by the grace of the jewel of the house of Raghu that a boat could float though laden with iron.<sup>1</sup>

[S. 251.] Day by day everybody wandered through the forest in all directions, as happy as frogs and peacocks refreshed by the early showers of the rains. [C. 252.] The men and women of the city were in such raptures that the days passed like moments. Sītā, in various guises, did the same reverent service to each one of the queens. No one but Rāma knew the secret, for in Sītā's magic dwelt all magic power. Sītā won the queens' hearts by her service; they were pleased and gave her their counsel and their blessings; and when the wicked queen Kaikeyi saw how simple Sītā was, and the two brothers also, she bitterly repented, and prayed to earth and the god of death; but earth opened not to

<sup>1</sup> *loha lai laukā tirā*: i.e., that Rāma (the boat) could carry the forest-dwellers (iron) across the ocean of birth and death. The *śikā* interprets: 'that iron could float, carrying the boat', but this seems less appropriate.

swallow her, nor would God grant her to die. Tradition and the Vedas make it known, and the poets too declare, that hell itself will not make room for one who is an enemy of Rāma.

Now everybody was anxiously wondering, 'O God, will Rāma return to Avadh or not?' [D. 252.] Bharat could neither sleep by night nor eat by day; he was as anxious and agitated as a fish, sunk in the mud at the bottom of the river, is troubled about the lack of water. [C. 253.] 'Fate', he thought, 'in the guise of my mother has wrought this mischief, like the dread of drought or flood or some other calamity when the rice-crop is ripening. How can Rāma's coronation be brought about? I cannot think of a single plan. He will certainly return if the *guru* bids him, but then the sage will only bid Rāma do what he knows to be his will. Raghurāū would go back at the bidding of his mother, but Rāma's mother would never coerce him. Of what value would my word be, who am his servant? Moreover, my lot is evil and God has withdrawn his favour. If I urge him to return, it will be a very grievous sin, for the duty of a servant outweighs Kailāsa.'

Bharat spent the whole night in anxious thought but could come to no decision at all. At dawn he bathed and bowed his head before the Lord, and was just taking his seat when the seer summoned him to his presence. [D. 253.] He did obeisance to the *guru*'s lotus feet and with his permission took his seat; the Brāhmans, the nobles, the ministers and all the councillors assembled together.

[C. 254.] The great sage addressed them in words that suited the occasion: 'Hearken, ye councillors and wise Bharat! The upholder of righteousness, sun of the Solar race, Rāma the king, the Blessed Lord, on none dependent, true to his word and guardian of the bounds of scripture—this Rāma has taken birth to bring blessing to the world. Obedient to the word of his *guru* and his father and mother he destroys the hosts of evil and befriends the gods. No one knows more truly than Rāma the principles of conduct and devotion and all spiritual and material truth. Brahmā, Hari, Hara, the moon, the sun and the guardians of the quarters, illusion, life, and fate and time in their entirety, the Serpent King, the sovereigns of the earth and all that hold sway, and the perfections attained by austerity of which Veda and Āgama tell—ponder it well and see—the will of Rāma rules them all! [D. 254.] It will be well for us all to regard Rāma's will and pleasure. Remember this and in your wisdom decide together on a plan and act

accordingly. [C. 255.] All would be delighted if Rāma were crowned; that would be the one way to ensure happiness and joy. How may Raghurāū return to Avadh? Think carefully and propose a plan that may be put into effect.'

They all listened with respect to the great sage's words, so full of sound policy and spiritual and worldly wisdom; but no one could answer; all were helpless, till Bharat bowed with folded hands and said, 'In the Solar race there have been many kings, each greater than the others. Their parents only gave them birth, and God assigned to them the fruit of their good and evil deeds; but it was your blessing, as all the world knows, that subdued all their sorrows and secured their happiness. It is you, holy father, who have checked the course of fate. Who, then, can annul a decision you have made? [D. 255.] Yet now you ask me to suggest a plan! How unfortunate am I!'

When he heard these loving words, the *guru* was enraptured. [C. 256.] 'My son,' he replied, 'your words are true, but it is all of Rāma's grace; no one can possibly win to success who withstands Rāma. But there is one proposal I hesitate to make, my son; wise men sacrifice the half when they see the whole in jeopardy. You two brothers go into the woods, and let Laksman, Sītā and Raghurāū come back.'

The two brothers rejoiced to hear these welcome words and were filled with the most perfect happiness. Their hearts were as glad and their bodies as radiant with joy as though king Daśarath were alive again and Rāma on the throne. The people gained much and lost but little; but the queens all wept, for their grief was equal to their joy. Said Bharat, 'If I do the sage's bidding, I shall reap the reward of giving the world what it most desires. I will dwell in the forest for the rest of my life; no greater happiness can I enjoy than this! [D. 256.] Rāma and Sītā read the secrets of the heart, and you are omniscient and wise. If, lord, you mean what you say, then make your proposal good.'

[C. 257.] When they heard Bharat's words and perceived his affection, the sage and the whole assembly were beside themselves with joy. Bharat's great magnanimity was like the ocean and the sage's proposal like a woman standing on the brink; she wishes to cross and anxiously seeks a way, but can find no boat or ship or raft. Who can worthily praise Bharat? Can the ocean be contained in a shell from a pond? The sage's soul was inwardly pleased with Bharat, and together with the company he went to

Rāma. The Lord did obeisance and gave him an honourable seat, and all sat down at the sage's bidding.

Then the great sage with careful consideration uttered words that suited the place and time and occasion: 'Give ear, O Rāma, omniscient and all-wise, treasure-house of righteousness, sound judgement, virtue and wisdom ! [D. 257.] You dwell in the hearts of all and know their good and evil intents; devise now a plan which will benefit the citizens and your mothers and Bharat. [C. 258.] Those who are afflicted speak ill-considered words, and a gambler thinks only of his own throw.'

Then to the sage's speech Raghurām replied, 'Lord, it is you who must decide. The good of all lies in regarding your wishes, in cheerfully obeying your commands and acknowledging them as truly wise. First, then, whatever you bid me do, I will dutifully obey your instructions, and next, holy father, I will engage without reserve in whatsoever service you impose.'

'O Rāma,' said the sage, 'what you say is true, but Bharat's affection has disturbed my judgement; and that is why I say again and again that my opinion is ruled by Bharat's devotion. In my view—Śiva be my witness—that will be best which is done in accordance with Bharat's will. [D. 258.] Listen attentively to Bharat's petition and then ponder it; and reflecting deeply on the wisdom of the saints and popular opinion, on the dictates of royal duty and the teaching of the Vedas, so act.'

[G. 259.] When he perceived the *guru*'s great love for Bharat, Rāma's heart was filled with joy; for he knew Bharat to be a staunch upholder of righteousness and his own servant in thought and word and deed. He spoke, as the *guru* had bidden him, words soft and gentle that brought blessing to all: 'By yourself I swear, my lord, and make oath by my father's feet, never has there been in the world such a brother as Bharat ! Thrice blest in the eyes of the world and the view of the Veda are those who are devoted to their *guru*'s lotus feet; and who can describe the good fortune of Bharat in that you love him so dearly ? He is my younger brother, and therefore I hesitate to praise Bharat to his face. It will be best for us to do whatever Bharat says.' So saying, Rāma was silent.

[D. 259.] Then the sage said to Bharat, 'Now, my son, tell your beloved brother, the ocean of grace, freely and frankly all that is in your heart.'

[C. 260.] Hearing the sage's words and perceiving that Rāma too assented, he was fully satisfied with the favour shown him by his *guru* and his master; but seeing the whole burden laid upon his shoulders, he could utter no word, but stayed thinking. Then trembling with emotion, he stood up in the assembly with his lotus eyes overflowing with tears of love and said, 'The lord of sages has said all I would say; so what more can I propose? I know my Lord's nature; he is never wroth even with an offender, and he has shown me special tenderness and love. Never even in play have I seen him angry. From a child I have never left his side, and he has never hurt my feelings. I have experienced my Lord's kindly ways, for even when I was losing in a game he would let me win. [D. 260.] My love and my diffidence have ever constrained me to keep silence before him; to this day my eyes, athirst for his love, have not been satisfied with looking upon him.

[C. 261.] 'But God could not endure my fondness for him and basely divided us by means of my mother. Yet to say this now brings no credit to me; who is good and pure because he thinks he is? To imagine that my mother is wicked and I good and upright is to sin a myriad times over. Can good rice be produced from ears of *kodo*<sup>1</sup> or a black shell give birth to a pearl? Not the least blame can possibly attach to anyone; all is due to the fathomless ocean of my ill fortune! In vain do I revile my mother and wound her to no purpose, not understanding that this is the consequence of my own wrong-doing. I search every corner of my heart but find no solution; in one matter only is my good assured; the holy father is my *guru*, and Sītā and Rāma are my masters; therefore I hold that all will turn out well.

[D. 261.] 'In this assembly of the saints, before my *guru* and my Lord, and in this holy place, I speak in all sincerity; the sage and Raghurāmā know if this is love or hypocrisy, truth or falsehood.

[C. 262.] All the world bears witness to the death of the king, who kept the oath he swore in love, and to my mother's wicked purpose. I cannot bear to look upon the unhappy queens; the men and women of the city are consumed by intolerable pain; and I am the cause of all these troubles. Yet though I hear and understand it all, I still endure the anguish. Though I heard that Raghunāth had gone to the forest with Laksman and Sītā, clad in hermit's garb and walking barefoot—Śamkara is my witness—I

<sup>1</sup> The *kodo* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) bears a small grain of inferior quality.

still survived the wound! Again, when I beheld the Niṣāda's devotion, my heart, harder than a thunderbolt, did not break! And now I have come and seen everything with my own eyes, and yet this wretched life of mine still holds to life, after making me endure all this. Those at the sight of whom serpents and scorpions on the road withhold their deadly poison and forget their savage wrath—[D. 262.] Raghunandan, Lakṣman and Sītā—appeared to Kaikeyī as her foes! On whom, then, but her son should fate inflict intolerable woe?

[C. 263.] When they heard Bharat's noble words, so sad and loving and modest and prudent, wrung from his unquiet heart, all grieved most sorely and the whole company was in distress as when a lotus-bed is smitten by the frost. The wise sage consoled Bharat with the relation of all kinds of ancient legends, and Raghunandan, moon to the lilies of the Solar race, spoke fitting words: 'Brother, grieve not your heart in vain; know that the course of life depends on God. I hold that all the virtuous men who ever lived or shall live in the three worlds are not to be compared, dear Bharat, with yourself. If any even in thought ascribe iniquity to you, this world is lost to them and salvation in the next; and those who blame your mother are mere fools who have not sought the company of the *guru* or the holy. [D. 263.] By the recollection of your name all sin and ignorance and the burden of all that is unblest shall be destroyed, and fair fame shall be won in this world and bliss in the world to come.

[C. 264.] 'Bharat, I tell you truly, and Śiva is my witness, this world depends on your support. Dear brother, cherish not vain apprehensions; hatred and love can in no wise be hid; birds and beasts will come near to sages, but flee at the sight of the huntsman who would harm them. If beasts and birds can recognize friend and foe, how much more can man in whom dwell virtue and insight? I know you, brother, through and through. What am I to do? My soul is in sore doubt! The king was true to his promise and abandoned me; he gave up his life to keep his vow of love. Were I to make his promise void, I should be grieved; yet my regard for you is greater still; the *guru*, moreover, has laid his commands upon me; surely, then, whatever you say, that I desire to do. [D. 264.] Be of good cheer and speak without reserve. I will do what you say at once.'

The assembled people were glad when they heard the words of Raghubar, ocean of truth; [C. 265.] but the king of heaven and all

the gods were alarmed and thought that all their plans were going to be spoilt; there was nothing to be done; mentally they all took refuge with Rāma. Again they reflected and said to one another, 'Raghupati is bound by the faith of the faithful'. When they remembered the stories of Ambarīsa and Durvāsā, the king of heaven and the gods were in utter despair. Long time had the gods endured distress till Prahlāda had brought about the revelation of Narasimha. They whispered in one another's ears and beat their heads, saying, 'This time the gods' success depends on Bharat; there is no other plan, ye gods, in view. Rāma regards service done to his faithful servants. Dwell ye all, therefore, with loving heart on Bharat, whose virtue and loving-kindness win Rāma to his will.'

[D. 265.] When he heard the gods' resolve, their *guru* said, 'It is well; great is your good fortune. Devotion to the feet of Bharat is the source of every blessing in the world. [C. 266.] Service done to the servant of Sītā's lord is as effective as a hundred cows of plenty. Now that faith in Bharat has entered your hearts be no more anxious, for God has promised success. Behold, O heavenly king, the mighty power of Bharat; Raghurāū has of his own free will submitted himself to his guidance. Be calm, ye gods, and fear not, knowing that Bharat is Rāma's shadow.'

When he heard the plans and anxious fears of the gods and their *guru*, the Lord, who knows the secrets of all hearts, was embarrassed; and Bharat, realizing that the burden of decision was on his shoulders, pondered a myriad suggestions in his heart; and after deep reflection he determined that in obedience to Rāma's will lay his highest good. 'He has broken his own vow,' he thought, 'to make mine good; how great are the favour and the love he has shown me! [D. 266.] Measureless favour has Sītā's lord shown me in every way!'

Then said Bharat, doing obeisance and folding his lotus hands, [C. 267.] 'O master, ocean of grace, dweller in the hearts of all, what now can I say or cause to be said? Now that my *guru* is pleased and my Lord is gracious, the fancied torments of my melancholy soul are at an end. False were the fears that made me afraid, unfounded my anxiety. It is not the fault of the sun, divine Lord, if a man mistake his direction. My own ill fortune, my mother's wickedness, the crooked ways of destiny and fate's malignity, all these together were determined to undo me, but the protector of his suppliants has kept his promise to protect. Herein

your course of action is not new; tradition and the Veda have declared it; it is no secret. The world is evil; the Lord alone is good; tell me, then, by whose goodness can good be?<sup>1</sup> Your nature, divine Lord, is like that of the tree of Paradise, which treats not any with favour or disfavour. [D. 267.] If a man recognize that tree and draw near to it, its shade relieves all cares, and king and beggar, good and evil, all receive in this world what they desire for the asking.

[C. 268.] 'Now that I see the perfect love my *guru* and my master bear me, my troubles are at an end and I have no more doubts. Now, O mine of compassion, so act for your servant's good that the soul of my lord be not troubled. Base is the mind of that servant who seeks his own good to the embarrassment of his master. Herein lies a servant's good that he should lay aside all selfish pleasure and advantage to do his master service. It is to the interest of all that my lord should return, but to yield to your will is a thousand times better. This is the essence of temporal and spiritual blessing, the fruit of all well-doing and the ornament of salvation. Listen, divine Lord, to this my one petition, and then do as you think right. I have prepared and brought all that is needed for your coronation; if you think proper, Lord, make use of it. [D. 268.] Send me and my younger brother into the forest and give all your people their king again; or else send back our two brothers, Lord, and let me accompany you; [G. 269.] or else let us, your three brothers, go into the woods, and you yourself, Raghurāī, return with Sītā. O Lord of compassion, do whatever pleases you. Divine master, you have laid the whole burden of decision on my shoulders, but my thoughts have no concern with policy or duty; for all I say is for my own advantage. When a man is sorrowful, his judgement is not sound. When a servant answers back after hearing his master's will, Shame herself is ashamed to look at him. Yet such an one am I, a fathomless ocean of iniquity—and my master affectionately extols me as good! Now, gracious Lord, the plan that pleases me is that which least vexes my master's soul. By my Lord's feet I swear and affirm in all sincerity, that is the only plan that can bring blessing to the world. [D. 269.] If my lord gladly and freely will give each one of us his commands, all will dutifully obey them and all this trouble and misunderstanding will be at an end.'

<sup>1</sup> The verse is obscure and has been interpreted in many ways.

[C. 270.] The gods were glad when they heard Bharat's sincere words; they commended him and praised him and rained down flowers; but the people of Avadh were a prey to uncertainty. The ascetics and dwellers in the forest were overjoyed. Raghunāth maintained an embarrassed silence, and when they saw the Lord's condition, the whole company was disquieted.

At that moment there arrived messengers from Janak, and when the sage Vasistha heard of their arrival, he at once summoned them to his presence. They did obeisance and looked at Rāma, and when they saw his dress they were sorely grieved. The great sage asked the messengers if all was well with the king of Videha. At this question the noble heralds diffidently bowed to the ground and with folded hands replied, 'Sire and holy father, your kindly inquiry makes all well; [D. 270.] else, Lord, well-being died with the king of Kosala; the whole world is left orphaned, and especially Mithilā and Avadh. [C. 271.] When they heard of the death of Kosala's lord, Janak and all his court were demented with grief. None who saw Videha at that time thought his name truly appropriate.<sup>1</sup> When he heard of the queen's ill-doing, the monarch was as bewildered as a serpent bereft of its jewel. Bharat king, and Raghubar banished to the woods! The heart of the king of Mithilā was sorely grieved. The king asked his assembled wise men and ministers, "Consider and tell me what ought now to be done". Reflecting on the plight of Avadh and baffled by the dilemma, "Should he go or should he stay?", no one gave any answer. Then the king composed himself, and taking thought, sent four discreet spies to Avadh to find out whether Bharat's intentions were good or evil and to return at once without anyone knowing of their mission. [D. 271.] The spies went to Avadh, and after discovering Bharat's disposition and noting his actions, all four returned to Tirahuta just as Bharat set out for Citrakūta.

[C. 272.] 'The spies came back and reported Bharat's movements in Janak's court, as far as they were able; and when the *guru*, the royal household, the ministers and the king heard their report, they were profoundly moved with anxiety and love. Then Janak, calming himself and extolling Bharat, called together the warriors of his army, and having posted guards to protect the palace and city and realm, had horses and elephants and chariots and many other conveyances made ready, all in about three quarters of an hour.

<sup>1</sup> For how could one who was *videha* (bodiless) feel such grief?

The monarch set out at once and took no rest on the road. This morning at dawn he bathed at Prayāga and marched on, and when the whole host began to cross the Yamunā, then, lord, he sent us on for news.' So saying, they bowed to the ground. The great sage gave the messengers an escort of six or seven Kirāts and dismissed them.

[D. 272.] All the people of Avadh rejoiced to hear of Janak's arrival; but Raghunandan was troubled, and the king of heaven a prey to deep anxiety. [C. 273.] The wicked Kaikeyī was bitterly remorseful. 'To whom', she thought, 'can I speak, on whom lay the blame?' Men and women were delighted, for they thought they had a few more days to stay. In this manner the day passed, and early the next morning everybody bathed, and after their ablutions they all worshipped Gaṇeśa and Gauri and Tripurāri and the Sun. Next, they did homage to the feet of Lakṣmi's lord and prayed--the men with cupped hands, the women spreading out the skirts of their robes--: 'May Rāma be king and Jānakī queen, and may Avadh, the capital, reach the height of bliss, happily restored with all its people, and may Rāma make Bharat heir apparent! O Lord, shed on all the nectar of this happiness and grant us in this world to reap our life's reward!' [D. 273.] May Rāma rule in the city with the *guru*, his council and his brothers; and may we die in Avadh while Rāma still lives as king!' [C. 274.] Such was the prayer all prayed, and when they heard the citizens' loving prayer, the wise sages thought little of their own austerities and detachment.

After thus performing their daily devotions the people of Avadh did obeisance to Rāma in an ecstasy of rapture. High and low and of middle rank, men and women, each was received into his presence according to his or her estate. He carefully paid them all due honour, and all gave praise to the treasure-house of grace: 'It was ever Raghubar's habit from boyhood to deal kindly with those in whom he recognizes love; Raghurāū is an ocean of loving-kindness and modesty, gracious in speech and look, simple and sincere.' Thus speaking of Rāma's perfections, all began rapturously to praise their own good fortune: 'Few are there in the world so meritorious as we whom Rāma acknowledges as his own!' [D. 274.] All were at that time absorbed in devotion when the sun of the lotus Solar race, hearing that the king of Mithilā was approaching, rose with his retinue in courteous haste to greet him.

[C. 275.] With his brothers and ministers and the *guru* and the citizens Raghunāth advanced to welcome him, and as soon as king Janak saw the beauteous mountain, he did obeisance and descended from his chariot. So eager and delighted were they to see Rāma that no one felt the least fatigue or weariness from their journey; for their souls were with Raghubar and the princess of Videha, and who without a soul can feel bodily pain or pleasure? Thus Janak and his retinue came forward, intoxicated with love; and when they beheld them near at hand, all began to greet one another with love and courtesy. Janak did homage to the sages' feet and Raghunandan did obeisance to the seers. Then Rāma and his brothers embraced the king and conducted him and his company to the hermitage.

[D. 275.] The hermitage was an ocean, filled with the pure water of quietude, and Janak's host was like a river of compassion, guided thereto by Raghunāth. [C. 276.] It flooded the banks of wisdom and detachment; the streams and rivulets that joined its course were words of sympathy. Sorrowful sighs were its wind-driven waves that broke down the noble trees on its banks of patient courage. Dire distress was its swift-flowing current, and dread and delusion its numberless eddies and whirlpools. Sages were the oarsmen on the great boat of knowledge, but in no wise could they row it. The poor Kols and Kirāts who dwelt in the forest were the travellers who wearily watched for the boat with sinking hearts. When the river reached and mingled with the ocean of the hermitage, the sea seemed to swell, disturbed and troubled. The two royal hosts were so disquieted with sorrow that they lost all wisdom, courage and sense of shame. They lauded king Daśarath's nobility and virtuous character and wept like men plunged into a sea of sadness. [Ch. 11.] Plunged into a sea of sadness, men and women mourned in deep distress, all crying with indignant reproaches, 'What is this that adverse fate has done?' Gods, adepts, ascetics, anchorites and sages were all powerless, when they witnessed Videha's plight, to cross the river of his love.

[S. 276.] The great sages offered the people their inexhaustible store of consolation, and Vasiṣṭha said to Videha, 'Be of good courage, O king! [C. 277.] How can illusion and the sense of self come near to one by the sun of whose wisdom the night of birth and death is scattered and in the bright rays of whose speech sages expand like the lotus? Such is the mighty power of the love of Sītā and Rāma! There are three classes of beings in the world

whom the Veda has described—the sensual, the aspirant and the wise adept. In the company of saints the highest reverence is paid to him whose soul is filled with love for Rāma. There is no beauty in wisdom apart from love for Rāma; it is like a boat without a helmsman.' Thus the sage said all he could to console Videha, and then all the people bathed at Rāma's *ghāṭ*. All the men and women were so sorrowful that the day passed without their even drinking water; not even the beasts and birds and deer took food, much less the king's own friends and household.

[D. 277.] Early the next morning the royal son of Nimi and the royal son of Raghu bathed together with their hosts, and then all took their seats beneath the banyan tree, sad at heart and wasted.

[C. 278.] The Brāhmans who dwelt in Daśarath's city and those who lived in the king of Mithilā's capital, as well as the *guru* of the Solar race and Janak's family priest, who in this world had explored the path of spiritual truth, began to instruct the company on various topics—religion, morality, detachment and discernment; and Viśvāmitra related a number of old-time stories, eloquently admonishing the whole assembly. Then Raghunāth said to Viśvāmitra, 'Yesterday, lord, everybody went without water'. Said the sage, 'Raghurāī has given me a timely reminder; it is already past noon'. The king of Tirahuta read the seer's mind and said, 'This is not the place for us to take our food'. Everyone was pleased with what the king had said, and, taking permission, they all went to bathe. [D. 278.] At that moment came the forest-dwellers, bringing a number of baskets laden with fruits and flowers and leaves and roots of every kind.

[C. 279.] By the grace of Rāma the hills produced all that the heart could desire. The very sight of them dispelled all melancholy; the lakes and rivers, woods and forest glades all seemed to overflow with bliss and love. The creepers and the trees all bore fruit and flowers; birds and beasts and bees all made melody together. A scene of perfect happiness was the forest at that hour, fanned by grateful breezes, soft, cool and fragrant. The enchantment of the forest defied description; it was as though earth herself were welcoming Janak as her guest. All the people of the city, having bathed and taken permission from Rāma and Janak and the sage, gazed in ecstasy at the splendid trees and stopped here and there to rest, while leaves and fruit and roots and bulbs of every kind, pure and fair and sweet as nectar, [D. 279.] were courteously sent to all in heaps by Rāma's *guru*; and doing

reverence to the Fathers, the gods, the guests and the *guru*, they ate this frugal fare.

[C. 280.] In this manner four days were spent; men and women gazed on Rāma and were happy. Both companies entertained the same longing; there is no satisfaction, they thought, in returning without Sitā and Rāma; life in the forest with Sitā and Rāma is as pleasant as to dwell in a myriad heavens; adverse is his fate who longs for home and would abandon Lakṣman, Rāma and the princess of Videha! It is only when fate is kind to us all that we can dwell in the woods near Rāma, bathing in the Mandākīnī three times a day and enjoying the ever-blessed sight of Rāma, wandering about on Rāma's hill and visiting the anchorites' retreats in the forest and eating ambrosial bulbs and roots and fruit. So pleasurable will the fourteen years pass like a moment that we shall not be conscious of their passing. [D. 280.] Everyone was saying, 'We do not deserve such happiness; how can we hope for such good fortune?' So natural and sincere in both hosts was their devotion to Rāma's feet.

[C. 281.] Thus all were uttering the desires of their hearts in terms of affection delightful to hear when handmaidens, sent by Sitā's mother, learnt that the time was convenient and returned. On hearing from them that Rāma's mother and the other queens were all at leisure, the ladies of Janak's court arrived to visit them. Kausalyā courteously welcomed them and brought and gave them such seats as suited the occasion. Such were the kindness and affection shown by all on either side that even the hardest thunderbolt would have melted at the sight and sound. They trembled and wellnigh swooned with emotion, and their eyes were filled with tears. They all traced lines on the ground with their toes and lamented. They all resembled images of love for Sitā and Rāma, or Compassion taking many forms and weeping.

Sitā's mother said, 'Perverse is the judgement of God, who has taken a thunderbolt for a chisel to break up the froth of milk!

[D. 281.] We hear of nectar but see only poison. Cruel are all God's acts! Everywhere are crows and owls and cranes, but swans only in the Mānasa lake!'

[C. 282.] To this queen Sumitrā sorrowfully replied, 'The ways of God are very contrary and hard to understand; he preserves his creation and then destroys it. His purposes are as meaningless as a game played by a child.' 'No one is to blame,' said Kausalyā; 'pain and pleasure, loss and gain, are controlled by fate; inscrutable

are the ways of destiny, known only to the Creator, who apportions all rewards, both good and ill. All are subject to the will of God; creation, preservation and dissolution, poison and ambrosia are ordered by his decree; vain is it, O queen, to sorrow in the toils of delusion, so immutable and from everlasting are God's designs. If we regard the king's life or death and mourn for him, sister, it is because we are thinking of our own loss.'

'Your words are true and noble,' said Sītā's mother, 'O queen of Avadh's lord, most excellent in virtue.'

[D. 282.] With heavy heart Kausalyā said, 'If Laksman, Rāma and Sītā go to the forest, all will be well in the end, not ill; it is Bharat who causes me anxiety. [C. 283.] By the grace of God and your blessing my sons and their wives are pure as Gaṅgā's water. Never to this day, sister, have I sworn by Rāma, but now I swear by him and tell you truly, even Sarasvati's skill could not do justice to Bharat's loving-kindness, virtue, modesty and noble temper, his brotherly love and devotion, his faithfulness and goodness; can the seas be drained dry with a shell? I have always known that Bharat was the light of our house, and the king has said so time and again. Gold is proved on the touchstone and a gem by the jeweller; so also are men proved at the testing time by their character. But it is not meet for me to speak thus at this time; I am sad and fond, and therefore lacking judgement.' All the queens were deeply moved when they heard her words, as purifying as Gaṅgā's stream.

[D. 283.] Kausalyā composed herself and said, 'Hearken, lady, queen of Mithilā, who is able to advise you, who are the dear wife of the wisest of men? [C. 284.] Find an opportunity to suggest to the king, as from yourself, O queen, that Laksman should be kept at home and Bharat go to the forest. If the king approve the plan, we will think it over carefully and do our best to arrange it; for I am very anxious about Bharat. Bharat's love is so profound that if he stays at home I fear some evil consequence.'

When they marked her pure intent and heard her simple eloquence, all the queens were overwhelmed with compassion. There was a shower of blossoms from the sky and cries of exultation. Adepts, ascetics and sages wellnigh swooned with love. All the ladies of the court were dumbfounded when they saw it. Then Sumitrā calmed herself and said, 'Lady, nearly an hour of the night has passed'. [D. 284.] Whereupon Rāma's mother graciously arose, and said frankly and affectionately, 'Pray retire

at once to your tents. Now we must look to God for help or to the king of Mithilā.'

[C. 285.] Perceiving her affection and hearing her modest words, Janak's beloved queen clasped her holy feet and said, 'Lady, we should look for such humility in you, seeing you are Daśarath's wife and the mother of Rāma. Kings have regard to the lowliest of their servants, even as fire is crowned with smoke and hills bear grass upon their summits. The king is your servant in thought and word and deed, and Maheśa and Bhavāni ever ready to lend their aid. Who in the world is worthy to be your helper? Does the sun shine brighter with the aid of a lamp? Rāma will go to the forest and accomplish the purpose of the gods, and afterwards hold absolute sway in the city of Avadh. By the might of Rāma's arm gods, serpents and men will live in peace, each in his own dominion. All this Yājñavalkya prophesied long since, and, lady, the word of a sage must be fulfilled.' [D. 285.] So saying, she fell at her feet, and with the utmost affection begged that Sītā might go with her. Permission was granted, and Sītā's mother departed with her daughter.

[C. 286.] The princess of Videha greeted the dear members of her household as befitting each. When they saw Jānakī wearing hermit's dress, they were all exceedingly distressed. Taking permission of Rāma and the *guru*, Janak went to the tent and saw Sītā; he clasped his daughter to his bosom, the guest of his pure love and very life. His bosom swelled, like the ocean, with affection, and the king's soul was like Prayāga; he beheld Sītā's love growing like the banyan, and glorious on the tree the love of Rāma like a child. That love the king's troubled sense laid hold of for support, as the sage Cirañjivī, when drowning, grasped the child.<sup>1</sup> Though Videha's mind could not ordinarily be affected by delusion, yet such was the mighty influence of his love for Sītā and Raghubar. [D. 286.] So moved was Sītā by her parents' love that she could scarcely control her emotion; but with due regard to the occasion and the call of duty Earth's daughter composed herself.

[C. 287.] When Janak saw Sītā clad in hermit's dress, great were his love and contentment. 'Daughter,' he said, 'you have made both our houses holy. Everyone in the world proclaims your radiant renown. The river of your fame has surpassed the Gaṅgā,

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Cirañjivī.

for it has flowed through ten million universes. Gaṅgā has made great but three places on the earth,<sup>1</sup> but this river of yours has established countless assemblies of the saints.' Thus spoke her father with all the eloquence of truth and love, but Sītā was embarrassed and shrank into herself. Once more her father and mother pressed her to their bosoms and gave her good advice and richly blessed her. Sītā said nothing but was inwardly troubled by the thought that she ought not to stay there for the night. The queen read her thoughts and told the king, praising in her heart her daughter's modest disposition. [D. 287.] Again and again they embraced Sītā and graciously bade her farewell. Then the prudent queen seized the opportunity to speak to the king persuasively about Bharat's state of mind.

[C. 288.] When the monarch heard of Bharat's behaviour, pure as gold, fragrant as perfume, quickening as nectar, bright as the moon, he closed his tear-filled eyes and trembled with emotion, and began rapturously to sing his praises: 'Attend to me, O queen, fair of face and bright of eye! The story of Bharat is one to loosen the bonds of birth and death. Religion, statecraft and metaphysic—according to my ability I have some knowledge of these subjects, but when it comes to telling of Bharat's greatness, that ability of mine cannot pretend to touch even its shadow. Brahmā, Gaṇeśa, the Serpent King, Śiva and Sarasvatī, poets, scholars, the wise and learned, to all these do Bharat's acts, his glory and his conduct, his piety and chivalry and virtue and stainless majesty bring joy when they reflect on them or hear of them, excelling Gaṅgā in purity and nectar in sweetness.'

[D. 288.] 'Boundless in excellence is he; there is no man to be compared to him. Bharat only is like Bharat, mark that well. Can Mount Sumeru be likened to a couple of pounds' weight? Even so all the poets shrink from comparisons. [C. 289.] His greatness, fair lady, none can express, even as no fish can move upon dry land. Immeasurable is his majesty—believe me, O queen—Rāma comprehends it, but not even he can describe it.'

After thus affectionately speaking of Bharat's noble nature the king, perceiving the inclination of his consort's heart, continued: 'If Lakṣman returns and Bharat goes to the forest, it may be well for all, and that is what all desire; but, lady, the mutual love and trust of Bharat and Raghubar are beyond all dispute. Bharat is

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Haridvāra, Prayāga and Sāgara.

the pattern of devotion and attachment, while Rāma is a model of impartiality. Bharat has never even dreamt of turning his mind's eyes towards all the joys of this world or the next; the goal of his endeavour is love for Rāma's feet; this seems to me to be the single article of Bharat's creed. [D. 289.] Bharat would never even think of thwarting Rāma's will. Then mourn no more; let not affection master you.' So spoke the king in troubled accents.

[C. 290.] As the royal pair thus affectionately discoursed of the virtues of Rāma and Bharat, the night seemed to them to pass like a moment. At dawn both the royal companies awoke, and bathed and worshipped the gods. Having bathed, Raghurāī approached the *guru* and doing homage to his feet spoke with his permission: 'My lord, Bharat and the citizens and the queens are disquieted by grief and wearied by their stay in the woods. The king of Mithilā, too, and his retinue have been suffering trouble for many days. Be pleased to do, lord, what seems best to you, for the good of all is in your hands.' So much Raghurāī said and hesitated to say more, and the sage was delighted to see his thoughtfulness.

'Rāma,' he replied, 'without you all pleasures would seem to both the royal hosts like hell. [D. 290.] You, Rāma, are the soul of their soul, the life of their life, the joy of their joy; unblest are they, dear son, who leave you and prefer the comforts of home. [C. 291.] Perish the pleasures, the actions and religious creeds wherein is found no love for Rāma's lotus feet! Austerity is nothing worth, wisdom is but ignorance, wherein the love of Rāma is not supreme! All are unhappy in your absence and happy when you are there. You know the thoughts of every heart; all are subject to your will; the gracious Lord knows well what each one feels. Return now to the hermitage.' The lord of sages was overcome by love.

So Rāma did obeisance and departed, and the seer composed himself and went to Janak. The *guru* told the king what Rāma had said, such loving and considerate words. 'Now, O king,' he said, 'do what will be best for all, provided it conflict not with duty. [D. 291.] You, O king, are a treasure-house of wisdom, prudent and pure of heart, steadfast in right-doing. Who but yourself is able at this time to resolve our doubts ?'

[C. 292.] Janak was so overjoyed by the sage's words and the sight of his emotion that his wisdom and detachment were forgotten. Faint with love, he thought to himself, 'I should never have come here. The king bade Rāma go to the forest, and himself gave

proof of his love for his dear son; but I have sent him from wood to wood, and shall return, happy and proud of my discernment! The anchorites, sages and Brāhmans were utterly overwhelmed with emotion when they heard and saw the king's condition; but thinking that the time had come, the king controlled his feelings and went with his retinue to Bharat. Bharat advanced to welcome him and offered him as good a seat as the circumstances permitted. 'Bharat, my son,' said the king of Tirahuta, 'you know Raghubir's disposition. [D. 292.] Rāma is devoted to truth and staunch in the performance of duty, and such is his loving-kindness towards all that he hesitates not to endure any hardship. Tell me, then, your decision.'

[C. 293.] At these words Bharat trembled with emotion and his eyes filled with tears; but compelling himself to be calm, he replied, 'My lord, I love and reverence you as my father, nor can a father or mother wish me as well as the *guru* of my family. Here today are Viśvāmitra and the other sages and the assembly of ministers, and you yourself, an ocean of wisdom. Regard me, my master, as your child and servant, obedient to your commands, and give me your directions. In such a company and such a place that you should question me! If I remain silent, I shall seem sullen; if I speak, I shall appear mad. Yet with these paltry lips I utter mighty words—forgive me, father, for you know that God looks not kindly on me! It is declared in the Vedas, the Āgamas and the Purāṇas, and known to all the world, that faithful service is hard to perform. Duty to one's master conflicts with self-interest; enmity is blind and love unwise.<sup>1</sup> [D. 293.] Have regard to Rāma's will, his duty and his vow, and remember that my will is not my own. Bear in mind the love all feel for him and do what all approve and what is best for all.'

[C. 294.] When the king heard Bharat's words and marked his noble temper, he and all his retinue extolled him. Simple, yet incomprehensible; soft and pleasant, yet severe; sparing in words, yet fathomless in meaning; his pregnant speech could no more be grasped than the face in a mirror held in the hand. Then the king and Bharat and the sage, together with the host, went to him by whom the gods are gladdened as the lilies by the moon. All were

<sup>1</sup> So the *sikā*, explaining, 'Whether I speak from self-interest (which is opposed to love and duty), or from affection for my master, I am liable to err.' Some take *baira* as *bahrā*: 'the deaf and the blind cannot express their love.'

anxious and disquieted when they heard these tidings, like fish at the touch of the first showers of the rains. The gods, seeing first the emotion of the family *guru*, then witnessing Videha's profound affection and Bharat's deep devotion to Rāma, were selfishly dismayed and plunged into despair; when they saw that everyone was filled with love for Rāma, they were all unspeakably apprehensive.

[D. 294.] The king of heaven anxiously exclaimed, 'Rāma is ruled by love and modesty. We must put our heads together and devise some stratagem, or all will be lost!' [C. 295.] So the gods called on Sarasvatī and flattered her: 'Goddess,' they cried, 'protect the gods who come to you for refuge! Use your magic influence to alter Bharat's purpose and by some deceptive scheme rescue the host of heaven!'

When she heard the deities' petition and realized that the gods were blinded by selfish motives, the wise goddess replied, 'You bid me alter Bharat's purpose! You cannot see Mount Sumeru for all your thousand eyes! Great is the illusive power of Brahmā, Hari and Hara; yet can it not comprehend the purpose of Bharat, and that is the purpose you bid me confound! Can moonlight steal the sun? In Bharat's heart dwell Sītā and Rāma; can there be darkness where the sun shines bright?' So saying, Sarasvatī departed to Brahmā's realm, and the gods were left despondent as the *cakavā* in the night. [D. 295.] Downcast, the selfish gods devised wicked plots and evil stratagems and formed powerful enchantments of dread and error and sorrow and disheartenment. [C. 296.] Such was the villainy the king of heaven practised, thinking that in Bharat's hands lay success or failure.

But Janak went to Raghunāth, and the light of the Solar race welcomed them all with honour. Then the priest of the house of Raghu spoke as befitted the occasion, the company and religious principles. He repeated the conversation of Janak and Bharat and recounted Bharat's noble words. 'Rāma, my son,' he said, 'everyone will obey whatever command you give; that is my conclusion.' At this Raghunāth folded his hands and made answer, simple, sincere and sweet: 'In your presence and that of the king of Mithilā it is altogether improper for me to speak. Whatever be your will and that of the king, by yourself I swear that I am truly ready to obey it.'

[D. 296.] When they heard Rāma's oath, the sage and Janak and the whole assembly were at a loss. They all looked towards

Bharat and none could make reply. [C. 297.] Seeing that the assembly was confounded, Bharat, Rāma's brother, composed himself with an effort and restrained his emotion (for he saw it was not the time to display it), even as Agastya bowed down the Vindhya range when it was rearing itself aloft. Grief carried away the judgement of all, as Hiranyakṣa carried away the earth, but from his spotless perfections, like the womb of the universe,<sup>1</sup> sprang forth the huge boar of Bharat's discernment and easily at that time wrought their deliverance. With folded hands he did obeisance to all and with humble reverence addressed Rāma, the king, the *guru* and the saints: 'Pardon this day all that misbecomes me, for with these feeble lips I utter stubborn words.' He thought in his heart on glorious Śāradā, and from the holy lake of his soul<sup>2</sup> she rose to his lotus mouth, and Bharat's speech, fraught with pure wisdom, piety and goodness, was like a lovely swan. [D. 297.] With the eyes of discernment he saw that the whole company was faint with love. He did obeisance to all and spoke with his thoughts fixed on Sītā and Raghurāja.

[C. 298.] 'Lord, you are my father and mother, my friend, my *guru* and my master. Worshipful Lord, you work my weal and read the secrets of my heart. Sincere and best of masters, in whom all loving-kindness dwells, protector of your suppliants, omniscient and all-wise, all-powerful friend of those who come to you for shelter, respecter of virtue and destroyer of vice and sin, master, there is no holy master like yourself, no enemy of his master like myself! In my folly I endeavoured to annul my Lord's word and my father's, and assembled a host and came hither. In the world are good and bad, high and low, ambrosia and immortality, poison and death; but never have I seen or heard of any who even in thought could thwart the will of Rāma. I have been altogether presumptuous, and my Lord in his love has accounted my presumption service.'

[D. 298.] 'Lord, of your grace and goodness you have worked my weal; my faults have become my ornaments and my fair fame is everywhere extolled. [C. 299.] Your conduct and the greatness of your noble temper are known to all the world and are sung in the Vedas and the Āgamas. The cruel, the perverse, the wicked, men of evil purpose and disrepute, the base, the ill-conditioned,

<sup>1</sup> The *śikṣa* takes *bimala-guna-gana* as an epithet of *mati*.

<sup>2</sup> *mānasa* is used in a double sense.

atheists and reckless—all these you receive as your own when you hear that they have come to you for refuge, if but once they do obeisance. Though you behold their faults, you never take them to heart, and if you hear of their virtues, you laud them in the assembly of the saints. What master is so gracious to his servant, himself supplying all he needs ? He never dreams of reckoning what he himself has done, but sorrows at heart if his servant be embarrassed. There is no other master like him—so I affirm with arms upraised ! Animals dance and parrots are clever at repeating what they have learnt, but the parrot's achievements depend upon the teacher and the animal's movements on the dancer. [D. 299.] Even so have you corrected and honoured your servants and raised them to be chiefest of the saints. Who but the Lord of mercy will perforce maintain his honour thus ?

[C. 300.] 'Whether it was from grief or affection or childishness that I came hither despite your commands, you in your mercy have reckoned me your friend and taken it all in good part. I have seen your feet, wherefrom all blessing springs, and I have learnt that my master is truly gracious to me. In this great assembly I have witnessed my good fortune, that in spite of my grievous error my master loves me still ! The treasure-house of grace has done all, nay, more than all, to fill me full and satisfy me with his mercy and his favour. Holy master, of your loving-kindness and your native goodness you have shown me your affection. Lord, great has been my presumption in speaking as I would, boldly or humbly, without due respect for my master and this assembly; but pardon me, Lord, as one in deep distress.

[D. 300.] It is a great mistake to say overmuch to a master who is kindly, wise and good. Lord, now give me your commands, for you have altogether brought me to my senses.

[C. 301.] 'I swear by the dust of my Lord's lotus feet—the glorious quintessence of truth and righteousness and bliss—and solemnly affirm that, whether I wake or sleep or dream, my heart's desire is this, to serve my master with sincere devotion, unselfishly and honestly, not seeking the four rewards. There is no better way to serve a good master than by obeying his commands; so, Lord, let your servant win this favour.'

So saying, he was utterly overpowered by loving emotion. He trembled and his eyes filled with tears. Deeply moved, he clasped the Lord's lotus feet; so touching a scene defies description. The ocean of grace honoured him with kindly words, and taking his

hand seated him by his side. Raghurāū and the assembly wellnigh swooned with love when they heard Bharat's humble speech and marked his noble character.

[Ch. 12.] Raghurāū and the assembly of saints, the sage and the king of Mithilā wellnigh swooned with love. Silently they praised Bharat's brotherly love and the exceeding greatness of his devotion. The gods, too, magnified Bharat and rained down flowers, but reluctantly; and all the people, when they heard his speech, were distressed and shrank into themselves like lotuses at the approach of night.

[S. 301.] When Indra saw that all the men and women in both the hosts were sad and dejected, the evil-hearted villain sought to gain his ends by slaying the already slain. [C. 302.] The king of heaven is the prince of guile and rascality; he loves another's failure and his own success. The ways of Indra are like those of a crow, deceitful, scoundrelly, putting no faith in any. First of all he wove an evil plot, and gathering together all the forces of deceit, he heaped discouragement on the heads of all; yet, though all were bewitched by the god's delusive magic, they would not be parted from Rāma by reason of their exceeding love for him. Afraid and dispirited, their thoughts were unstable; at one moment they longed to stay in the forest, at another to return home. In this unsettled state the people's minds were as disturbed as the water where the river runs into the sea. Thus divided in mind, they found no comfort anywhere, nor did any disclose to another the secrets of his heart; and when the gracious Lord saw it, he laughed to himself and said, 'A dog, an adolescent and Indra are all alike!'<sup>1</sup>

[D. 302.] Except for Bharat, Janak, the sages, the ministers and the wise saints, all were affected by the divine illusion, each according to his nature. [C. 303.] The gracious Lord saw that the people were disquieted by their love and the powerful craft of the king of heaven, and the assembly, the king, the *guru*, the Brāhmans and the ministers all spell-bound by Bharat's devotion; all were gazing at Rāma like painted pictures, diffidently uttering words as though learnt by rote.

(The praise of Bharat's love, humility, modesty and greatness is grateful to the ear, but how difficult to express! How can Tulasi

<sup>1</sup> A reference to Pāṇini: *Adhyāya* 6, *Pāda* 4, *Sūtra* 133 (*śva-yuva-magho-nāma-taddhite*), where the grammarian mentions the three nouns as being all subject to the same peculiarity in their declension.

expound the majesty of one at the sight of one atom of whose devotion the sages and the king of Mithilā were drowned in a sea of love? Only by his devotion and nobility is the poet's inner intelligence inspired. But the poet's mind, knowing itself to be small and Bharat's majesty great, shrinks from the task, abashed before the genius of others; it dwells on his perfections in passionate admiration, but cannot express them, for it stammers like a child.

[D. 303.] Bharat's spotless glory is like the spotless moon and the poet's mind is like the partridge that looks with fixed gaze upon it, risen in the sky that is the votary's spotless heart. [C. 304.] Not even the Vedas can easily comprehend Bharat's magnanimous nature; wherefore, ye poets, pardon the trifling of my paltry wit. Who that hears or tells of Bharat's goodness will not become devoted to the feet of Sītā and Rāma? Who so unblest as he who finds not meditation on Bharat a ready path to love for Rāma?)

Beholding with compassion the plight of all the people, and in his wisdom reading his servants' hearts, Rāma, steadfast upholder of righteousness, master of policy, ocean of truth and love and graciousness and joy, maintainer of just conduct and affection, Raghurāja, having regard to the place and the time and the occasion and the assembly, spoke words that were the quintessence of all speech, bringing the matter to a happy conclusion and sweet as the moon's ambrosia to the ear: 'Bharat, my brother, you are the upholder of the right, conversant with the world and the Veda, a master in the art of love. [D. 304.] There is none to be compared with you, dear brother, in purity of thought and word and deed; but in this assembly of *gurus* and in these sad times how can the virtues of a younger brother be proclaimed? [C. 305.] You know, my brother, the custom of the Solar line and the glory and affection of our father, ever true to his word; the occasion, too, and the honour due to this assembly and the *gurus*, and all that is in the mind of friend and foe and neutral. You know what all should do and the duty it were far best for you and me to observe. Though I have complete confidence in you, yet would I say somewhat to suit the occasion. Brother, in the absence of my father only the favour of the *gurus* has upheld me; else would my people, my household and my family have all been ruined together with myself. If the sun sets untimely, tell me, is there any in the world will not be troubled? Such a calamity, brother, had fate decreed, but the sage and the king of Mithilā have saved us all.'

[D. 305.] 'All the affairs of state, our honour and good name, religion, our land and wealth and homes—all these the *guru's* power will protect, and all will be well in the end. [C. 306.] Both you and I and all our companies, at home or in the forest, are guarded by the *guru's* grace. Obedience to the command of parents, *guru* or master upholds all righteousness, as Śesha upholds the world. Obey, then, this command, and cause me to obey it too, and so, dear brother, be the guardian of the Solar race. Only obedience leads the aspirant to perfect success, a Triveni of glory, salvation and power. So reflect and make your people and your kinsfolk happy, though the burden you must bear be heavy. All have shared in my afflictions, brother, but for the period of my exile yours will be the hardest part. Brother, I know your sensitive heart, and what I say seems harsh; but my words are not unsuited to these evil times. In the hour of danger a true brother gives his aid, even as the stroke of a sword is parried by the hand.

[D. 306.] The servant is the hand or foot or eye; the master is the mouth.'

(Great poets admire this description of loyalty when they hear it.)

[C. 307.] When the whole council heard Raghubar's words, steeped, as it were, in nectar churned up from the ocean of affection, they fell into a trance of love; the sight of their condition robbed Śāradā herself of speech. Bharat was greatly comforted, for the kindness of his master had put to flight his pain and sense of guilt. His face was cheerful, his soul no more disconsolate; he seemed like a dumb man to whom Sarasvati had granted the gift of speech. Again doing loving obeisance, he folded his lotus hands and said, 'Lord, I am as happy as if I were to journey with you; I have reaped the reward of my birth into this world. Now, gracious Lord, whatever be your command, that will I reverently and dutifully obey. But grant me, Lord, some support, in the service of which I may endure to the end of the period of your exile.

[D. 307.] Lord, at the *guru's* bidding I have brought hither water from all the holy places for my lord's coronation; what will you I should do with it ?

[C. 308.] 'There is still one great desire in my heart, but I am nervous and afraid to express it.' 'Say on, brother,' said the Lord, and at his bidding he continued in tender, loving tones:

'If you grant permission, I would go and visit Citrakūṭa and all its sacred spots and holy places, the woods, the birds and beasts, the ponds and streams, cascades and hills, and especially the ground marked with the print of my lord's feet.' 'Yes, brother,' he replied, 'but first ask Atri's permission and then wander without fear through the forest. By the favour of that sage the woods bring blessing; they are holy, brother, and very beautiful. In whatever spot the lord of seers may bid you, there deposit the water from the holy places.' Bharat was glad to hear his Lord's words, and joyfully bowed his head before the sage's lotus feet.

[D. 308.] When the selfish gods heard this most blessed conversation between Bharat and Rāma, they praised the house of Raghu and rained down flowers from the tree of Paradise. [C. 309.] 'Blessed be Bharat and glory to Rāma, the holy Lord!' exclaimed the gods in uncontrollable joy.

The sage, the king of Mithilā and all in the assembly rejoiced on hearing Bharat's words. King Videha rapturously lauded all the perfections of Bharat and Rāma and their mutual love, the noble character of both master and servant, their constancy and affection, purest of the pure. The ministers and the councillors all affectionately praised them, as each was able. Both hosts experienced mingled joy and sorrow when they heard the conversation between Rāma and Bharat. Rāma's mother felt sorrow and joy in equal measure; she consoled the queens, speaking of Rāma's excellences. Some magnified Raghbir, while others praised Bharat's goodness.

[D. 309.] Then said Atri to Bharat, 'Near to the hill there is a beauteous well; pour thereinto the holy water, pure, ambrosial and without compare.' [C. 310.] Bharat, at Atri's bidding, had all the vessels of water brought, and himself, with his brother, Atri the sage and the saints, went to the deep well; and in that sacred place he deposited the holy water. Then thus spoke Atri in an ecstasy of love: 'My son, from all eternity this has been a holy place; but it was lost in the passage of time and no one knew of it. Then servants saw the spot was moist and dug a deep well for a supply of good water. By fate's decree the whole universe has found in it a blessing, and now religious meditation which had been very hard to practise has become easy. Henceforth men will call it "Bharat's well", a well made very holy by the water of the sacred places united in its depths; and all who bathe therein with vows

of pure devotion will be made clean in thought and word and deed.' [D. 310.] Thus speaking of the well's great virtue, they all went to Raghurāū, and Atri told Raghubar of the effectual sanctity of that holy place.

[C. 311.] That night was happily spent in the devout relation of pious legends. Day dawned, and Bharat and his brother, after their daily devotions, with the permission of Rāma, Atri and the *guru*, went with all their retinue in simple dress to roam in Rāma's wood. Their feet were tender and they walked unshod; earth was inwardly ashamed and made herself soft; she hid away the prickly grass and thorns and pebbles and ruts and all that was unpleasant and hard and rough; earth made the paths soft and beautiful, and grateful breezes blew, soft, cool and fragrant. The gods rained down flowers, the clouds lent their shade, the trees broke out into fruit and blossom, the grass was soft; beasts peered at them and birds made melody; all did them service, for they knew that they were Rāma's friends. [D. 311.] If an ordinary man finds the utterance of Rāma's name when he yawns an easy road to all success, this was no great marvel for Bharat, Rāma's most beloved brother!

[C. 312.] In this manner Bharat wandered through the woods, and the sages who beheld his constancy and love were abashed. He visited all the sacred ponds and streams and every part of the ground; he saw the birds and beasts, the trees and herbs, the hills and woods and gardens, all very sacred and of varied loveliness, all holy, and asked the lord of seers about them. The sage listened gladly to his questions and explained their purposes and names and qualities and spiritual potency. At one place he would bathe, at another do obeisance, at yet another enjoy the entrancing beauty of the scene; and again he would sit down with the sage's permission and meditate on Sītā and his two brothers. Seeing his noble disposition and his love and loyal service, the forest gods were pleased and gave him their blessing. Thus he roamed the woods, till early in the afternoon he returned to gaze upon the Lord's lotus feet. [D. 312.] Bharat spent five days in visiting the holy places, and the last day was spent in discourse on the glory of Hari and Hara till evening fell.

[C. 313.] Early in the morning the whole company bathed and met in assembly, Bharat, the Brāhmans and the king of Tirahuta Rāma knew in his heart that the right day had come, but the gracious Lord hesitated to say so. He looked towards the *guru*,

the king, Bharat and the assembly, and then with diffidence turned his eyes towards the ground. The whole company praised his courtesy and thought, 'Never was thore master so modest as Rāma!'

Bharat wisely read Rāma's thoughts and with resolute courage affectionately arose; he made humble salutation with folded hands and said, 'Lord, you have fulfilled my every desire; for me you have all borne hardship, and you yourself have suffered every kind of pain. Now, master, grant me leave to return to Avadh, there to serve till the appointed time.'

[D. 313.] 'But O gracious guardian of Kosala, merciful to the lowly, tell me some means whereby your servant may wait patiently for your return and see your feet once more. [C. 314.] The people of the city, your kinsfolk and your subjects are all bound to you, O holy Lord, by ties of pure and true affection. For your sake it is good to bear even the pain and torment of rebirth. Apart from the Lord the prize of liberation is nothing worth. Master, you are wise and know the desires and longings of the hearts of all, and of me, your faithful follower, and how we live. You are the protector of the humble and will protect us all. You are divine and will preserve us from the beginning to the end. Thus I have absolute and perfect confidence, nor does the smallest doubt disturb me, when I think of the future. My own distress and my lord's tender love together have constrained me to be thus bold. So, master, disregard this my great presumption and shrink not from teaching your disciple.' All praised Bharat's humble petition when they heard it, for, like the swan, it had separated the water from the milk.

[D. 314.] Wise Rāma, brother of the humble, hearing his brother's humble, guileless plea, replied in terms that suited place and time and circumstance; [C. 315.] 'Dear brother, you and I and our kinsfolk, at home or in the forest, are the care of the *guru* and the king. When the *guru* and the sage and the king of Mithilā are our guardians, neither you nor I need fear the least trouble. My highest aim and yours, our interest and glory, our duty and our spiritual welfare lie herein, that we two brothers should obey our father's will. Good is it thus to seek a monarch's good, as scripture and the world agree. He who obeys the instructions of his *guru*, his father and his mother and his master stumbles not, however rough the road he tread. Thus reflect and put away all anxious doubt. Go now, watch over Avadh for the appointed time. The heavy burden of the country, the treasury, the family and the

household will be borne by the dust of the *guru*'s feet. Do you observe the directions of the sage, your mother and your ministers, and guard the land, your subjects and your capital. [D. 315.] A chief should be like the mouth, which alone eats and drinks, yet nourishes and maintains each limb with nice discrimination. [C. 316.] Herein lies the whole duty of kingship, hidden in this maxim like desires in the mind.'

Thus in many ways he instructed his brother; but without some visible support Bharat found no peace or contentment. Moved by his affection and the presence of the *guru*, the ministers and all the company, Raghurāja was overwhelmed with loving confusion. Graciously the Lord gave him his sandals; reverently Bharat received them and placed them on his head. The sandals of the merciful Lord were as twin guardians of his people's life; a casket for the jewel of Bharat's love; the two letters of Rāma's name which are the soul's salvation; twin doors of the house of Raghu; two hands for noble deeds; clear eyes for service and righteousness. Bharat was as glad to receive this support as if Sītā and Rāma themselves had remained with him. [D. 316.] So Bharat bowed before the Lord and asked permission to depart, and Rāma took him and clasped him to his heart.

But the scheming lord of the immortals seized this sorrowful opportunity to instil into the people a spirit of indifference. [C. 317.] Yet that wicked action turned out to be for the benefit of all. Like their expectation of the end of the period of exile it preserved their lives; else would all have died of grief, as of some fell disease, when separated from Laksman, Sītā and Rāma. The grace of Rāma made the crooked straight, and the gods' attack but served to aid his cause. Rāma folded Bharat in his arms in a close embrace; no tongue can describe his loving emotion. Affection like a flood overwhelmed his body, mind and speech; self-control deserted the prince of self-control; his lotus eyes streamed with tears. The gods all grieved to see his plight; the sages, too, the *guru* and so self-restrained a one as Janak, whose minds had been tested like gold in the fire of wisdom and whom God had created as uncontaminated by worldly emotions as the leaves of the lotus by the water, [D. 317.] even they, when they witnessed the matchless, boundless love of Raghubar and Bharat, were overwhelmed—body, mind and speech, detachment, judgement and all!

[C. 318.] Where the reason of such as Janak and the *guru* were all astray, it would be very wrong to speak of that affection as

ordinary. Men will think the poet hard-hearted when they hear him telling of the parting between Raghubar and Bharat. So pathetic a scene defies description; the poet's eloquence falls silent before the memory of that moment of love. Raghubar embraced Bharat and consoled him, and then gladly took Śatrughna to his heart. Seeing that Bharat wished it, the servants and ministers began each to attend to his own business; and when they heard it, both the hosts, sorely grieving, set about making their preparations for departure. The two brothers did homage to their Lord's lotus feet and set out in obedience to Rāma's will, repeatedly doing humble reverence to the sages, the anchorites and the forest deities. [D. 318.] They embraced Laksman, and doing obeisance, placed on their heads the dust of Sītā's feet, and receiving her affectionate blessing, source of all bliss, set out upon their journey.

[C. 319.] Rāma and his younger brother bowed to the king and addressed him with many expressions of humility and praise. 'Lord, in your kindness you have been greatly troubled by coming to the forest with your host. Be pleased now to bless me and return to your city.' The king restrained his emotion and departed. Then Rāma bade farewell to the sages, the Brāhmans and the saints, paying them honour as equals of Hari and Hara. Then the two brothers went to see their mother-in-law and returned, after doing homage to her feet and receiving her blessing. Next, Rāma and his brother did humble obeisance to Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva and Jāvāli, the citizens, their kinsfolk and loyal ministers, as was fitting, and bade them all farewell. All the men and women, of high and low and middle estate, the gracious Lord courteously dismissed. [D. 319.] The Lord then did homage to the feet of Bharat's mother and embraced her with sincere affection; he dispelled all her embarrassment and grief, and making ready a palanquin for her, bade her farewell.

[C. 320.] Sītā, who loved with pure love her soul's beloved, embraced her kinsfolk and her parents and returned. To all the queens she did obeisance, embracing them with an affection which the poet's heart has no ambition to describe. Listening to their instruction and receiving the blessing she craved, Sītā remained absorbed in the affection of both the families. Raghupati sent for splendid palanquins and with words of consolation seated all the queens therein. Again and again the two brothers embraced the queens with great affection and set them on their way. The hosts of Bharat and the king made ready their horses and elephants and

various carriages and set out on their journey. With Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣman in their hearts, all the people departed disconsolate; even the animals—bullocks, horses and elephants—were disheartened and went dispirited, against their will. [D. 320.] Doing homage to the feet of the *guru* and his wife, the Lord and Sītā and Lakṣman returned to their hut of leaves with mingled joy and sorrow in their hearts.

[C. 321.] Rāma then bade a courteous farewell to the Niṣāda, who departed with a heart sore grieved at the parting. The Kols, Kirāts and Bhils, who dwelt in the forest, he dismissed; they did repeated obeisance and went home. The Lord and Sītā and Lakṣman sat in the shade of the banyan tree and grieved for the loss of their friends and relatives. Rāma spoke to his beloved wife and younger brother in eloquent tones of Bharat's love and noble character, and with his own holy lips affectionately commended the devotion and loyalty he had displayed in thought and word and deed. At that hour the birds and beasts and the fish in the streams and all created things at Citrakūṭa were melancholy. Seeing Raghubar's condition, the gods rained down flowers and told him all they dreaded in their several spheres. The Lord did obeisance and reassured them, and they departed happily, relieved of all their fears. [D. 321.] So with Sītā and his brother the Lord dwelt glorious in his hut of leaves, like Faith and Wisdom and Detachment in bodily form.

[C. 322.] The sage, the Brāhmans, the *guru*, Bharat and the king were all disturbed at parting with Rāma, and all proceeded in silence on their journey, meditating on the Lord's many perfections. They all crossed the Yamunā and passed that day fasting; then they crossed the Gāngā and made their second halt, and Rāma's friend made all arrangements for their comfort. Next, they crossed the Saī and bathed in the Gomati, and on the fourth day reached the city of Avadh. Janak stayed in the city for four days and settled all the business and administration of the state; then, entrusting the government to the minister, the *guru* and Bharat, he set out with all his retinue for Tirahuta. All the men and women of the city, in obedience to the *guru*'s instructions, settled down peacefully in Rāma's capital. [D. 322.] They all looked forward to seeing Rāma once again and to that end made strict vows and fasted, and giving up adornments and luxurious delights, lived only in the hope of his return from banishment.

[C. 323.] Bharat gave directions to his ministers and faithful servants and each performed his duty as bidden. Next, he sent for his younger brother and instructed him, and entrusted to him the care of all the queens. Then Bharat summoned the Brähmans and, doing obeisance with folded hands, made humble petition, as suited his youth: 'In high matters or low, in all that is good or bad, hesitate not to issue your commands.' Next, he called together his household, the people of the city and his subjects; he consoled them and settled them in fit dwellings. Then with his brother he went to the *guru*'s house, and prostrating himself, said with folded hands, 'With your leave I shall live in observance of the ascetic rule'. The sage replied in an ecstasy of love, 'Whatever you think and say and do will be your highest duty in the world'. [D. 323.] Hearing this, and receiving his instructions and his fervent blessing, he sent for the astrologers, and fixing a suitable day placed on the throne securely the sandals of his Lord.

[C. 324.] Bowing his head before Rāma's mother and the feet of the *guru*, and taking leave of the Lord's sandals, he made a hut of leaves at Nandigrāma and there dwelt in strict observance of religious duty. With knotted hair upon his head and clad in hermit's garb he dug the earth and prepared a couch of grass; in matters of food and dress and vessels, strict vows and observances, he kept devoutly the austere rule of a religious life. Adornments, rich attire and every luxury and pleasure, in thought and body and speech, he rigidly<sup>1</sup> abandoned. The king of heaven himself had been jealous of the kingdom of Avadh; and the god of wealth had been ashamed when he heard of Daśarath's riches; but now in that city dwelt Bharat without desire, like a bee in a garden of *campā*<sup>2</sup> flowers. A devoted disciple of Rāma, highly blest, discards like vomit the sensual delights of wealth. [D. 324.] For Bharat, a chosen vessel of Rāma's love, this was no great achievement. The cuckoo is commended for its constancy and the swan for its power of discrimination.

[C. 325.] Day by day his body grew thinner and his vigour and strength declined, but his face lost none of its beauty. Ever renewed was his resolute vow of devotion to Rāma; the tree of his righteous life sent forth fresh shoots and his soul knew no dark

<sup>1</sup> *tin tūrī*: so the *tikā*, taking it as *trīa torkar*, i.e., *pratijñā karke*. Or it may be for *trīa tulya*, equal to a blade of grass.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that bees do not visit the sweet-scented yellow flowers of the *campā*.

despair. As water falls low when the autumn sky is bright, but the reeds are glad and the lotuses blossom forth, so in the clear sky of Bharat's heart shone forth the stars of continence and self-control, restraint, austerity and fasting. His confidence was like the pole-star, the period of Rāma's absence the full moon, the remembrance of the Lord the brilliant Milky Way; his love for Rāma was like the moon, unmoved and spotless, ever shining clear and bright amid a galaxy of stars. How Bharat lived and thought and acted, his faith, detachment, goodness and pure superhuman power all the great poets shrink from telling; nor can Śesa, Gaṇesa or Sarasvatī approach the truth.

[D. 325.] Ever worshipping the sandals of his Lord with uncontrollable devotion, ever asking their advice, [C. 326.] trembling with emotion, with Sītā and Raghubir in his heart and their names continually on his lips and tears in his eyes he administered all state affairs. Laksman and Rāma and Sītā dwelt in the forest; Bharat, dwelling at home, tortured his body with austerities. Looking at the matter from both sides, all said that Bharat was in every way worthy to be praised. When they heard of his vows and observances, the pious were abashed, and the greatest saints were put to shame when they saw his plight. Very pure was Bharat's way of life, sweet and fair and the cause of joy and blessing. It destroyed the sin and sorrow of the Kaliyuga; the lord of day to scatter the dark night of profound ignorance; a lion to vanquish the elephant of accumulated sin; the conqueror of all affliction, bringing gladness to the faithful and freedom from the burden of rebirth; ambrosial essence of the moon of Rāma's love.

[Ch. 13.] (If Bharat had not been born, imbued with the ambrosia of love for Sītā and Rāma, then who would have practised such self-control and strict observance, continence, restraint and rigorous vows as scarce enter the imagination of sages? Who by virtue of his fair renown would have relieved us of our grief and torment, poverty, pride and other sins, and have brought poor fools like Tulasī perforce face to face with Rāma in this Kaliyuga?)

[S. 326.] Those who with strict observance and reverent hearts listen to Bharat's acts shall of a surety win to devotion to the feet of Sītā and Rāma and lose all interest in worldly pleasures.)

## THE FOREST

[**Sloka.**] I do homage to Śānikara, root of the tree of righteousness, full moon that delights the ocean of wisdom, sun that opens the lotus of detachment, who dispels the thick darkness of sin and relieves of every torment, a heaven-born wind to scatter the massed clouds of ignorance, proceeding from Brahmā, destroyer of sin, beloved of Lord Rāma the king.

I worship him whose body is dark and beautiful as a rain-bearing cloud, full of all delights, yellow-clad and handsome; in whose hands are bow and arrows and at his side a gleaming laden quiver; with large lotus eyes and tresses knotted on his head; the glorious wayfarer accompanied by Sītā and Laksman, even Rāma who charms all hearts.

[**Sorathā.**] O Umā, the perfections of Rāma are profound; by their virtue the learned and the sage attain to detachment, but fools who are opposed to Hari and take no delight in righteousness win only to folly.

[C. 1.] I have sung, as best I can, of the matchless and charming devotion of Bharat and the citizens. Hear now the holy acts of the Lord which he wrought in the forest, delighting gods and men and sages. One day Rāma plucked some lovely flowers and with his own hands wove a garland. With this the Lord reverently decked Sītā, as he sat on a gleaming crystal rock. The son of the king of the gods took the form of a crow and foolishly thought to test Raghupati's might, like an ant so utterly insane as to try to plumb the depths of ocean. The stupid crow in its folly pecked Sītā's foot and flew away. When the blood began to flow, Raghu-nāyak perceived it and fitted a reed arrow to his bow.

[D. 1.] Raghu-nāyak is very merciful and ever loves the humble; and it was on him that this fool, this utter villain, came and played this trick!

[C. 2.] Sent forth with a spell, the divine arrow flew on. The crow took to flight in a panic. He assumed his proper form and fled to his father, but he would not shelter him, for he was Rāma's foe. He was in despair and as terror-stricken as Durvāsā the seer by the discus. To every sphere he fled in turn, to Brahmā's realm

and Śiva's city, weary, frightened and remorseful, but no one even asked him to rest awhile; who can shelter an enemy of Rāma? Hearken, Garuḍ; his mother becomes death, his father like the king of hell, nectar turns to poison, his friend is a hundred times more hurtful than a foe, the Gaṅgā is Vaitarani, and—believe me, brother—all the world hotter than fire when a man falls foul of Raghubir!

When Nārada saw that Jayanta was in a panic, he took pity on him, for he is tender-hearted and good, and sent him straight to Rāma. 'Save me,' he cried, 'O thou that art the suppliant's friend!' Wretched and afraid, he went and clasped his feet, crying, 'Protect me, O protect me, merciful Raghurāi! I was a fool and did not recognize thy matchless might, thy matchless power! I have reaped the destined fruit of my own action; now save me, Lord; I have come to thee for refuge!' When the gracious Lord heard this most piteous plea, Bhavāni, he deprived him of one eye and let him go. [D. 2.] Though in his folly he had done him such an injury that he deserved to die, the Lord of his compassion set him free. Who is so merciful as Raghubir?

[C. 3.] Raghupati remained at Citrakūṭa and wrought many deeds grateful as nectar to the hearing. Later, Rāma thought to himself, 'There will be a crowd here, for everyone knows who I am'. So the two brothers and Sītā took leave of all the hermits and departed. When the Lord came to Atri's hermitage, the great sage heard of his arrival and was glad. Trembling with emotion, Atri arose and ran to meet him, and when Rāma saw him, he hastened to advance. He was falling prostrate before him but the sage clasped him to his bosom and bathed the two brothers in tears of love. His eyes were gladdened by the sight of Rāma's beauty. Then he reverently conducted them to his own hermitage. He worshipped them and spoke to them in courteous tones and gave them such roots and fruit as the Lord's soul desired.

[S. 3.] The Lord took his seat, and the great sage, supremely wise, gazed his fill upon his beauty; then folding his hands he sang this hymn of praise:

[Ch. 1.] 'I reverence thee, who lovest thy faithful followers, gracious and tender-hearted. Thy lotus feet I worship, which grant thine own abode to the desireless. I worship thee, O Lord, dark and wondrous beautiful, Mount Mandara to churn the ocean of rebirth, whose eyes are like the full-blown lotus, saviour from pride and every other sin.'

'Lord of immeasurable power, whose long arms win the victory; ruler of the three spheres, who bearest quiver, bow and arrows; ornament of the Solar race; breaker of Siva's bow; joy of high saints and sages; destroyer of the demon hosts; worshipped by Kāma's foe; reverenced by Brahmā and all the gods; embodiment of purest wisdom; destroyer of all sin; thee I adore, O Lakṣmi's lord, mine of bliss, salvation of the holy !

'I worship thee, thy consort and thy brother, thyself the beloved younger brother of Śaci's lord.<sup>1</sup> Men who unenviously worship thy lotus feet fall not into the ocean of rebirth with all its waves of controversial strife. Those solitaries who ever worship thee in glad hope of liberation, with every sense subdued, attain to that salvation which is their own.

'Thee I adore, the one mysterious Lord, the passionless and all-pervading sovereign, the eternal *guru* of the world, the perfect mystic, one alone; lover of love, whom the sensual can by no means comprehend, a tree of Paradise to thine own worshippers, impartial, ever worthy to be worshipped.

'To thee I do obeisance, sovereign of matchless beauty, Lord of the earth-born; I reverence thee; be gracious unto me and grant me devotion to thy lotus feet !'

(Those who reverently repeat this hymn of praise with faith in thee win to thy sphere; of this there is no doubt.)

[D. 4.] Again the sage with bowed head and folded hands made humble petition; 'Never, Lord, may my thoughts desert thy lotus feet !'

[C. 4.] Then Sitā clasped the feet of Anasūyā with modest courtesy and embraced her, and the soul of the seer's wife was filled with delight. She blessed her and seated her by her side. She arrayed her in celestial garments and jewels which remained ever fresh, unsullied and lustrous. In soft and gentle accents the seer's spouse spoke and instructed her somewhat in wifely duty: 'Hearken, princess; mother, father and brother are all friendly helpers, but the happiness they give is limited; there is no limit, Sitā, to the happiness a husband can afford, and base is the wife

<sup>1</sup> Indra was the eldest son of Kaśyapa and Aditi. When Viṣṇu became incarnate as a dwarf, he was born of the same pair; hence he is called the younger brother of Indra, Śaci's husband.

who does not pay him reverence. Courage, principle, a friend and a wife—these four are tested in time of trouble. Though a husband be old, diseased, stupid or poor, blind, deaf, bad-tempered or in great distress, yet if his wife treats him with disrespect, she will suffer all the tortures of hell. This is her one religious duty, her one vow and observance—devotion in thought and word and deed to her husband's feet.

There are in the world four grades of faithful wife, as the Vedas, the Purāṇas and all the saints declare. The best are perfectly convinced that there is no other man in the world at all. The next in order look on another's husband as their own brother, father or son. The woman who preserves her chastity merely because it is her duty and because she regards the honour of her family is said in the scriptures to be low; but account that wife lowest of all in the world whom fear alone restrains and want of opportunity. She who deceives her husband and enjoys an intrigue with another's is cast for a hundred aeons into the depths of the lowest hell. Who so vile as she who regards not the torments of innumerable lives for the sake of a moment's pleasure? The wife who honestly fulfils her wifely duty wins salvation with the greatest ease; but she who is disloyal to her husband, wherever she be born, becomes a widow in her early youth.

[S. 5a.] ‘Woman is inherently impure, but if she serve her husband faithfully, she wins to highest bliss. To this day the *tulasī* is beloved of Hari and the four Vedas sing its glory. [5b.] Hearken, Sitā; women will be faithful wives if they meditate upon your name, for Rāma is dear to you as your own life. All this I have said for the good of the world.’ [C. 5.] Jānaki was overjoyed when she heard her and reverently bowed her head before her feet.

Then the gracious Lord said to the sage, ‘If you grant me leave, I shall go to some other forest. Ever show me your favour and cease not to love me as your servant.’ To this request of the Lord, the upholder of righteousness, the wise sage affectionately replied, ‘You who utter these gentle words are that same Rāma whose grace is craved by Brahmā, Śiva, Sanaka and all adepts in spiritual lore, beloved of the desireless and friend of the lowly. Now do I understand the wisdom of Lakṣmi who turned from every god to worship you; such verily must be the loving-kindness of one whose greatness there is none to rival. How can I say, “Depart now, master”? It is for you to say it, Lord, who know

the secrets of all hearts.' So saying, the steadfast sage gazed upon the Lord; tears streamed from his eyes and he trembled with emotion.

[Ch. 2.] He trembled with emotion and, filled with passionate love, he fixed his eyes upon his lotus face. 'What prayers have I said, what penance practised, that I should behold my Lord, who transcends thought, knowledge, sense and the elements of nature ?'

(By prayer and austerity and the performance of all religious duties a man attains to perfect faith. Day and night Tulasi Dās sings the holy acts of Raghubir. [D. 6a.] The praise of the glory of Rāma destroys the sin of the Kaliyuga, subdues the mind and is the source of bliss. Rāma is pleased with those who listen reverently. [S. 6b.] In this grievous Kaliyuga is all pollution stored. Herein is no religion found or wisdom or austerity or prayer. Prudent are those who look for aid to none but Rāma and worship him alone.)

[C. 6.] Bowing his head before the sage's lotus feet, the Lord of gods and men and sages set out for the forest. Rāma went in front, and behind him his brother, glorious to behold in their hermit's attire. Between the two walked Sītā, like Illusion between the Absolute and the Individual Soul. The rivers, woods, mountains, precipices and passes all recognized their Lord and made the way easy for his feet. Wherever the divine Lord Raghurāya passed, the clouds in the sky afforded shade.

The demon Virādha met them on the road and straightway Raghubir slew him as he came. At once he assumed a beauteous form, and Rāma, seeing him sorrowing, sent him to his own abode. Then, with his fair brother and Jānaki, he came to the place where dwelt the sage Śarabhaṅga. [D. 7.] When he beheld Rāma's face, the great sage's eyes reverently drank in his beauty as bees sip the honey of the lotus; thrice blest was Śarabhaṅga to have been born.

[C. 7.] 'Hearken, O gracious Raghubir,' said the sage, 'swan of the holy lake of Śāmkara's soul ! I was just going to the realm of the Creator when I heard that Rāma was about to come to the forest. Day and night I have been looking out for you, and now that I have seen my Lord my soul is satisfied. Lord, I have done no works of merit, but you have shown me favour as your humble

servant. But this, Lord, is no special kindness you have done me; you have only fulfilled your own vow, you who steal your votaries' hearts! Stay here to bless your humble servant until I put off this body and meet you in your realm.'

Surrendering to the Lord the austerity and sacrifice, the prayers and penance and vows he had observed, he received the gift of faith; thus the sage Śarabhaṅga built a pyre, and expelling all attachment from his heart, took his seat thereon, saying, [D. 8.] 'O Lord, whose body is dark as the dark rain-burdened cloud, dwell ever in my heart with Sitā and thy brother, holy Rāma, God incarnate!' [C. 8.] With these words he consumed his body in the sacrificial fire and by Rāma's grace departed to Vaikunṭha; but the sage was not absorbed into Hari because he had received the gift of separate devotion before he died. The company of seers who witnessed the great sage's liberation rejoiced exceedingly with heartfelt joy and the whole assembly of sages broke forth into praise, crying, 'Glory to the friend of the suppliant, from whom all mercy flows!'

Then Raghunāth advanced further into the forest, accompanied by a great throng of holy sages. Seeing a heap of bones, Raghurāya was moved with compassion and asked the sages whose they were. 'Why, master,' they replied, 'do you ask of us? For well you know the answer, who are omniscient and read the hearts of all. These are the bones of all the sages whom the demon hosts have devoured.' When Raghurāya heard this, his eyes filled with tears, [D. 9.] and with arms upraised he took an oath: 'I shall rid the earth of demons!' Then he gladdened all the sages by visiting the retreats of each.

[C. 9.] The sage Agastya had a learned pupil named Sutikṣṇa, who was devoted to God. He revered Rāma's feet in thought and word and deed and never dreamt of putting trust in any other deity. As soon as he heard tell of the Lord's arrival, he ran with all speed to meet him with longing in his heart. 'O God,' he cried, 'will Raghurāya, friend of the humble, have mercy on such a wretch as I? Will Rāma, my holy master, and his brother receive me as their servant? Of this I have no sure confidence, for there is no devotion or continence or wisdom in my soul. I have never sought the company of the good or practised austerity, prayer or sacrifice; nor have I felt unwavering devotion to his lotus feet. Yet has the storehouse of compassion this one rule—"He is dear to me who seeks salvation in none other". Then shall my eyes

today be blessed with the vision of his lotus face who frees us from rebirth.'

The wise sage, Bhavāni, was so utterly absorbed in love that his state was beyond description. He lost all sense of direction on the road; he knew not who he was or where he was going; at one time he would turn and go back and then again advance; at another he would dance, singing of Rāma's virtues. Ever more profound grew the sage's love and devotion, while the Lord watched him, hiding behind a tree. Seeing his exceeding love, Raghubir, who dispels the dread of rebirth, manifested himself in his heart. The sage stood motionless in the middle of the road, and every hair on his body stood erect as on a jackfruit. Then Raghunāth drew near to him, rejoicing to see his servant's emotion. Rāma tried every means to awaken the sage, but he awoke not, for he was absorbed in the bliss of contemplation. Then Rāma withdrew his form as king and revealed himself as the four-armed in his heart, and the sage started up in agitation like a serpent distressed by the loss of its jewel. Seeing before him dark-hued Rāma, the home of bliss, with Sītā and his brother, the great sage fell prostrate at his feet, lost in love and greatly blessed. With his long arms Rāma took and raised him and clasped him to his bosom very lovingly. When the gracious Lord embraced the sage, he looked like a *tamāla* embracing a tree of gold; and as he gazed on Rāma's face, the saint stood motionless as a figure painted in a picture.

[D. 10.] Then the sage composed himself and clasping his feet again and again brought the Lord to his own hermitage and paid him every kind of reverence. [C. 10.] 'Lord, hear my humble prayer,' said the sage; 'how can I sing thy praises? Thy majesty is measureless, my wit is small, like the glow of a firefly in the face of the sun. I ever adore the Lord Raghbir, whose body is dark as a wreath of dark lotuses, with a crown of knotted hair and clad in hermit's garb, bearing bow and arrows in his hand, with quiver hanging at his side; a fire to burn up the dense thicket of ignorance; a sun to cherish the lotus-bed of saints; a lion to slay the elephant herd of demons; a hawk to swoop on the bird of birth and death! May he ever protect me!'

'I reverence Rāma, whose eyes are like the dawn-bright lotus, in guise most beautiful, gladdening the sight of Sītā as the lord of night the partridge; cygnet of the holy lake of Hara's heart; broad-chested and long-armed; Garuṇ to seize the snake of doubt; destroyer of despair born of contentious questioning; vanquisher

of birth and death; gladdener of the gods! Of his abundant mercies may he ever protect me!

'I reverence Rāma, impersonal and personal, both one in form and different, surpassing knowledge, speech and sense, unique, stainless, complete, faultless, illimitable, relieving earth of her burden! Garden of the tree of Paradise for his votaries, dread foe of wrath and greed and pride and lust, perfect in wisdom, bridge over the ocean of rebirth, banner of the Solar race, may he ever protect me!

'May Rāma, of unequalled might of arm, in whom all strength abides, whose Name destroys the many sins of the Kaliyuga, buckler of righteousness, whose countless virtues are the source of blessing, grant me abundant and unceasing happiness! Though he be passionless, all-pervading and immortal, ever dwelling in the hearts of all, yet may Kharāri, with Sītā and his brother, abide in my soul as wayfarers in the woods!

'Those who know thee, O master, as personal, impersonal, and dwelling in the hearts of all, may know thee so; but in my heart may that Rāma who is the lord of Kosala with lotus eyes make his abode! Never let my claim be forgotten that I am Raghupati's servant and he my Lord!'

Rāma was pleased when he heard the sage's praises, and once again he joyfully took the great sage to his bosom and said, 'Know, O sage, that I am most delighted; whatever boon you ask, I grant it you!'

'Never yet have I asked for a boon,' replied the sage, 'nor do I know what I should ask, what not; bestow on me, O Raghurāi, whatever you think best, for you grant happiness to your servants.'

'Become the treasure-house of deep devotion, continence and spiritual wisdom, all knowledge and every virtue!'

'I have received the boon my Lord has granted. Now grant me what I desire. [D. 11.] O Rāma, my Lord, bearing thy bow and arrows, dwell for ever unmoved<sup>1</sup> in my heart, with Jānaki and thy brother, like the moon in the sky.'

[C. 11.] 'So be it!' said Lakṣmi's lord, and joyfully set out to visit the seer Agastya. Said Sutikṣna, 'It is a long time since I last saw my *guru* and since I came to live in this hermitage. Now, Lord, I will go with you to visit him; I am not putting you, Lord, under any obligation.' The gracious Lord divined the sage's

<sup>1</sup> *nihakāma*: i.e., *niśkāma*: explained by the *sikā* as *sthira*.

subtlety<sup>1</sup> and took him with him; both the brothers smiled. Discoursing as he went on the incomparable virtue of faith in himself, the sovereign of heaven arrived at the sage's hermitage. Sutikṣṇa at once went to his *guru* and prostrating himself spoke as follows: 'Lord, the son of the king of Kosala, the world's support, has come to visit you, even Rāma, with his brother and the princess of Videha, to whom, my lord, you make your prayer night and day.'

As soon as he heard it, Agastya at once arose and ran to greet them, and at the sight of Hari his eyes filled with tears. The two brothers fell at the sage's lotus feet, and the seer very lovingly clasped them to his breast. The wise sage courteously asked after their welfare and conducted them to a fitting seat; then he paid the Lord all possible reverence and said, 'None is so blessed as I!', and all the other hermits assembled there rejoiced as they gazed on the source of joy. [D. 12.] In the midst of the assembly of sages he sat, facing each one; they looked like a bevy of partridges gazing on the autumn moon.

[C. 12.] Then said Raghubir to the sage, 'Nothing, my lord, is hidden from you; you know why I have come, and that, sir, is why I have not told you. Advise me now, lord, how I may slay the hermits' foes.'

The sage smiled when he heard the Lord's words. 'Lord,' he said, 'what makes you ask for my advice? By virtue of my devotion to yourself, O enemy of sin, I have learnt a little of your greatness. Your illusive power is like a spreading fig-tree and countless universes are its fruit; all creatures, moving and unmoved, are like the insects that live inside the fruit and know no other world; and the devourer of that fruit is cruel and inexorable Time; but even he ever trembles for fear of you. And it is you, the master of all the rulers of the spheres, who question me as though you were an ordinary man! This boon I crave of you, O home of grace; dwell in my heart with Laks̄mī and your brother and grant me profound devotion, detachment and the company of the good and ceaseless love for your lotus feet. Though you are the Absolute, indivisible and eternal, comprehensible only by intuition, adored by the saints, though I know and speak of that form of yours, yet I constantly turn back therefrom and spend my love on the Absolute made man! You always magnify your servants and this is why, Raghurāī, you have asked me this question. There is,

<sup>1</sup> Agastya had told his pupil, Sutikṣṇa, that he would regard his fees as paid if he brought the Lord to see him.

O Lord, a holy and very lovely spot, and its name is Pañcavatī.  
Purify, Lord, the forest of Dandaka and annul the great sage's  
grievous curse.<sup>1</sup> There abide, O king of the house of Raghu, and  
have compassion on all the hermits.'

Rāma took leave of the sage and set out and speedily drew near  
to Pañcavatī.

[D. 13.] After meeting the king of the vultures and treating him  
with great warmth of affection, the Lord stayed near the Godāvari,  
where he built himself a hut of leaves. [C. 13.] From the time  
when Rāma made his home there the hermits were happy and no  
longer afraid; the hills and the woods, the rivers and the lakes, took  
on new beauty and day by day grew lovelier. All the birds and  
beasts were glad and bees, sweetly humming, charmed the ear.  
Not even the Serpent King could describe the forest where Raghubir  
shone manifest.

One day the Lord was sitting at ease when Laksman spoke a  
guileless word: 'Master of gods and men and sages, and of all  
creation, I ask you as my own Lord, instruct me, divine being, and  
tell me how I may leave all to serve the dust of your feet. Tell  
me of knowledge and detachment and illusion; tell me of that  
faith that wins your grace. [D. 14.] Tell me, Lord, the whole  
distinction between God and the soul, and instruct me, that I may  
be devoted to your feet and freed from all sorrow and ignorance  
and error.'

[C. 14.] 'Briefly, dear brother, will I explain it all. Listen  
attentively and pay heed with mind and intellect and understanding.

"I" and "Mine", "You" and "Yours" are illusion, and this  
has won control of all individual souls. The senses and their  
objects, as far as mind extends, all this, brother, know to be  
illusion. Now hear a distinction within illusion—knowledge and  
ignorance, these two. The latter is exceeding evil, pain itself,  
under whose influence the soul has fallen into the well of trans-  
migration. The former creates the world, and subject to it are the  
elements of nature. This is sent forth by the Lord; it has no  
power of its own.

'Knowledge is that wherein is no thought of self;<sup>2</sup> it sees in all  
alike the Absolute.'

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Dandaka.

<sup>2</sup> The *śikṣā* takes *māna* as merely representative of all kinds of sin; but it  
seems better in this context to give it the sense of *ahambkāra*. Cf. *Bhagavad-*  
*gitā*, xiii, 8.

'He, dear brother, may be called perfect in detachment who has abandoned all religious aims and the three elements as nothing worth.

[D. 15.] 'That is called the individual soul which does not recognize illusion or God or its own true nature.<sup>1</sup>

'He who dispenses bondage and release, and is beyond all being, and sends forth illusion, is God.

[C. 15.] 'From the performance of duty springs detachment; from austerity, knowledge; knowledge brings release—so says the Veda. But, brother, it is faith in me that quickly melts my heart and brings bliss to the faithful. Faith is its own support; it needs no other stay. On it depends all knowledge, material and divine. Faith, dear brother, is an unequalled source of joy and can only be won when good men help in the winning.

'Now I tell you of the method of faith, whereby men find me; for the path is easy. First, by exceeding devotion to the feet of Brāhmans and by careful attention to one's own special duty, as scripture prescribes. Next, the fruit of this is indifference to material objects, and thence is born devotion to my cult, a firm hold upon the nine expressions of faith—listening and the rest<sup>2</sup>—with a heartfelt affection for my divine sport. Great love will my votary feel for the lotus feet of holy men; strict rule of prayer and praise will he observe, in thought and word and deed, strict service will he do to *guru*, father, mother, brother, spouse and god, regarding all as my very self; singing in ecstasy my perfections with faltering voice and streaming eyes. In whom is found no lust or pride or feigning, I am ever, dear brother, at his command.

[D. 16.] In the lotus hearts of those who in thought and word and deed make me their place of refuge and worship me without desire I dwell eternally.'

[C. 16.] When Laksman heard the doctrine of faith, he was exceeding glad and bowed his head at the feet of his Lord. In this way some days were spent in discourse on detachment, knowledge, virtue and good conduct.

<sup>1</sup> So the *śikṣā*. The verse may be interpreted in other ways, e.g., 'That is called the individual soul which does not know itself to be the master of illusion, i.e., identical with God.'

<sup>2</sup> These are said in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* to be: *śravana*, listening; *smarana*, meditation; *arcana*, worship; *kirtana*, reciting; *pādasevana*, service; *vandana*, obeisance; *dāsyā*, relation of servant; *sakhya*, relation of friend; *ātmānivedana*, self-dedication. But see also Ar. C. 33—C. 34.

Now Rāvan had a sister, Śūrpanakhā, vile at heart and venomous as a snake. One day she came to Paficavatī and was agitated when she saw the two princes. When a woman sees a comely man, Garuḍ, be he brother, father or son, she is excited, nor can she check her passion, as a sunstone melts at the sight of the sun. Assuming a beautiful form, she approached the Lord and spoke to him with many a smile: 'There is no man like you nor woman like myself; God has of set purpose planned this match. I have found no man in all the world to equal my comeliness though I have searched through the three spheres. That is why I have remained a maiden until now. But now that I have seen you I am somewhat drawn to you.'

Glancing at Sītā, the Lord replied, 'My younger brother is unmarried'. She went to Laksman, but he knew her for the sister of his foe, and looking at the Lord, spoke in gentle tones: 'Hearken, fair lady; I am his servant and dependant; you would not be happy with me. My lord is the powerful king of the city of Kosala, and whatever he does becomes him. A servant who expects ease, a beggar who looks for honour, a dissolute man who hopes for wealth, a profligate who aspires to salvation, a greedy man who hopes to win renown, and a conceited man who craves the four rewards, these are as men who would hope for milk by milking the sky.'

Again she turned back to Rāma, but the Lord sent her once more to Laksman. Laksman said, 'He will be a match for you who is utterly lost to all sense of shame!' Then, deeply mortified, she returned to Rāma and revealed her own fearsome form. Seeing that Sītā was afraid, Raghurāi made known his will to his brother by a sign. [D. 17.] With the utmost speed Laksman cut off her nose and ears, sending, as it were, a challenge to Rāvan by her hand.

[C. 17.] Robbed of her nose and ears, she was as hideous to behold as a mountain streaming with torrents of red ochre. She went sobbing to Khara and Dūṣana and cried, 'A curse, a curse, brothers, on your manhood and might!' They asked her what had happened and she told them all. When they heard it, the demons assembled an army, and thronging multitudes of fiends rushed out like hosts of winged hills of soot, mounted on every kind of vehicle, assuming every kind of shape, equipped with every kind of weapon, formidable, innumerable. They put Śūrpanakhā in front, an ill-starred form, robbed of her ears and nose. Countless terrifying

omens of evil occurred, but none heeded them, for the whole host was doomed to death; they roared, they shouted defiance, they flew through the air; the army was a sight to gladden a warrior's eyes. Cried one, 'Capture the two brothers alive, and when you seize them, slay them and carry off the woman!' The vault of heaven was filled with dust.

Rāma summoned his brother and said to him, 'Go, take Jānaki to a cave in the mountain, for a formidable army of demons has come; remain on the alert.' At the Lord's bidding he departed with Sītā, bow and arrows in hand. When Rāma saw that the enemy's forces had drawn near, he strung his massive bow with a smile. [Ch. 3.] He strung his massive bow and bound his hair in a knot on his head; it looked as though two snakes were struggling with a myriad lightning-flashes on an emerald hill. As he slung his quiver by his side and took the bow in his long arms and fitted the arrow to the string, he fixed his gaze upon the foe as a tiger glares at a herd of noble elephants.

[S. 18.] On came the warriors at full speed, shouting, 'Seize him! Seize him!' and surrounded Rāma as the demons surround the rising sun when they see it all alone.<sup>1</sup> [C. 18.] But when they beheld the Lord, the demon host was dumbfounded, nor could they shoot their arrows. Then Khara and Dūṣana sent for their minister and said, 'This must be some young prince, a jewel among men! Serpents, demons, gods, men, sages—all these have we seen and conquered and slain; but—hearken, all ye our brethren—never in the whole of our lives have we beheld such beauty! Though he has made our sister hideous to behold, yet should not so peerless a hero be put to death. Give him this message from me: "Hand over at once your wife whom you have hidden, and you two brothers go home alive," and come back swiftly with his answer.'

The envoys went and gave Rāma the message, but Rāma replied with a smile, 'We are Kṣatriyas and hunt in the forest, and it is such vicious beasts as you that we seek for our prey. We are not afraid at the sight of a lusty foe; we are quite ready to fight with Death himself. Though we are but men, we are destroyers of the demon race and protectors of the hermits; though we are but boys, we are chastisers of the villainous. If you are not strong enough

<sup>1</sup> Certain demons called Mundha are said to surround the sun at its first rising and to flee when Brāhmans perform their *sandhyā* rites.

to fight us, you had better go back home; I never kill an enemy in retreat. Treachery practised on the field of battle and mercy shown to the enemy betray the utter coward.' The envoys immediately returned and made a full report, and Khara and Dūṣana were furious when they heard it.

[Ch. 4.] They were furious and shouted, 'Seize him!'. The formidable demon warriors rushed forth, armed with bows and arrows, clubs, lances, pikes, scimitars, bludgeons and axes. First of all, the Lord twanged his bow with a harsh, dread, frightening twang that deafened the demons and threw them into confusion, nor at that moment did they know what they were doing. [D. 19a.] Then, realizing the strength of their enemy, they ran on cautiously and began to shower down on Rāma all kinds of weapons and missiles. [19b.] But Raghubīr cleft their weapons in twain like oil-seeds. Then he drew his bowstring to his ear and discharged his arrows.

[Ch. 5.] Then shot forth his dreadful arrows like a flight of serpents, hissing as they sped. Furious waxed the Lord Rāma in the strife, and exceeding sharp were the arrows that flew forth. Beholding his keen shafts, the demon warriors turned to flee. The three brothers<sup>1</sup> were furious: 'Whoever flees from the battle,' they cried, 'him will we slay with our own hands!' The demons turned back to fight, determined to die; they faced their foe and attacked with every kind of weapon. When the Lord saw that the enemy were mightily enraged, he fitted an arrow to his bow. Many an arrow he sent forth, and the dread demons began to be cut to pieces. Their breasts and heads, arms, hands and feet fell scattered everywhere upon the ground. They shrieked as the arrows struck them and their trunks fell like mountains to the earth. Though the warriors' bodies were cut into a hundred pieces, yet by magic they arose again. Numbers of arms and hands were flying through the air and headless trunks were rushing to and fro. Kites, crows and jackals snapped fiercely and grimly over the remains.

[Ch. 6.] Jackals snapped; ghosts, spirits and goblins collected skulls; vampires beat time on warriors' fleshless heads while witches danced. Raghubīr's fierce arrows cut to pieces the champions' breasts and arms and heads; everywhere fell their trunks, but rose again and fought with terrible cries of 'Seize him! Seize him!'

<sup>1</sup> The third was Trisirā, mentioned in Ch. 6.

Vultures clutched entrails and flew off ; goblins, too, grasped them in their hands and ran about. It was as though a band of children from the town of Battle was flying kites. Smitten and swooning, with breasts cleft in twain, many a warrior fell groaning.

When they saw their army routed, Trisirā and Khara and Dūṣana and other champions turned to meet the foe. Infuriated, demons innumerable hurled on the Lord Raghubir arrows, lances, clubs, axes, pikes and scimitars all at once. In the twinkling of an eye the Lord warded off the arrows of the foe and with a shout of defiance sent forth his shafts. He drove ten arrows into the heart of each demon captain. Their warriors fell to the ground but got up again to fight; they would not die but practised all their magic arts. The gods were afraid, for they saw that the fiends were fourteen thousand and the Lord of Avadh but one. When the Lord saw that the gods and sages were afraid, the master of illusion devised a merry spectacle. The enemy saw each his friend as Rāma, and joining battle with one another they fought and died. [D. 20a.] Crying, 'Rāma ! Rāma !', they left their bodies and thus won to the realm of bliss. By this means in a moment the gracious Lord slew his enemies.

[20b.] The gods rejoiced and rained down flowers, and in the heavens was the sound of music. Then they all sang praises and departed, glorious on their celestial cars.

[C. 19.] When Raghunāth had vanquished the foe in battle, and gods and men and sages had no more to fear, Laksman brought Sītā back and fell at the feet of the Lord, who joyfully took him to his heart. Sītā gazed very lovingly at his delicate, dark-hued body, nor could her eyes be satisfied. The Lord Raghunāyak abode at Pañcavati, doing deeds to gladden gods and sages.

When Šurpanakhā saw the overthrow of Khara and Dūṣana, she went to incite Rāvan to action. In a furious rage she addressed him : ' You have taken no thought for your land or treasure ; day and night you drink and sleep and care not that the enemy is at your gate. Sovereignty without statecraft, wealth without religion, good works not dedicated to Hari, knowledge that gives not rise to discernment—these all bring no reward but toil to the student, the doer or the possessor. Attachment is the swift ruin of an ascetic, bad advice of a king, pride of wisdom, drink of modesty, conceit of friendship and arrogance of the able ; these are the moral lessons I have learnt. [S. 21a.] One should not treat with scorn an enemy, disease, fire, sin, a master or a serpent.' So saying, she

began to weep with bitter lamentation. [D. 21b.] She threw herself down in the midst of the assembly and wept in an abandonment of grief, crying, 'O Ten-headed, am I to be treated thus while yet you live ?'

[C. 20.] At these words the councillors arose in consternation ; they comforted her and grasped her arms and raised her to her feet. 'Tell me what has happened to you,' said the king of Lankā ; 'who was it cut off your nose and ears ?'

'The sons of Daśarath, the king of Avadh, lion-like men, have come to hunt in the forest. I understood the purpose of their actions ; it was to rid the earth of demons. Relying on the strength of their arm, Ten-headed, the hermits are fearlessly roaming the woods. They are mere boys to look at, but in fact they are like Death, utterly dauntless archers and most accomplished. Both brothers are of unequalled might and majesty, vowed to the slaughter of the wicked and the relief of gods and sages. Rāma—for that is his name—is wonderfully beautiful, and with him is a girl of tender age, whom the Creator has fashioned of perfect loveliness, a match for a thousand million Ratis. It was his younger brother who cut off my ears and nose ; when he learnt I was your sister, he made me a laughing-stock. When Khara and Dūṣana heard my cry, they came to my aid, but he slew the whole of their army in a trice.'

When the Ten-headed heard that Khara, Dūṣana and Triśirā had been slain, he was utterly consumed with rage. [D. 22.] After consoling Śūrpanakhā and bragging and boasting of his strength, he went to his palace in the deepest anxiety and could not sleep all night. [C. 21.] He thought, 'Among gods and men and demons, serpents and birds, there is not one can face my servants ; Khara and Dūṣana were as mighty as myself ; who but God could slay them ? If God himself has come down to earth to gladden the gods and relieve earth of her burdens, then must I go and wage stubborn war against him, and if I lose my life, struck by an arrow of the Lord, I shall be delivered from rebirth. I cannot worship him in this dark demon form ; no, this is my firm determination, which I shall carry through in thought and word and deed ; and if they be but human and mere princelings, I shall conquer them both in battle and carry off his bride.' He mounted his chariot and drove off unattended to where Mārīca dwelt on the seashore.

Now listen, Umā, to the marvellous story of the scheme that Rāma devised. [D. 23.] When Lakṣman had gone into the

woods to fetch roots and fruit and bulbs, the Lord of grace and joy said with a smile to Janak's daughter, [C. 22.] 'Hearken, beloved wife, faithful, beautiful and virtuous; I am about to play an engaging game as man; do you then make your abode in fire till I have extirpated the demons.' As soon as Rāma had made an end of speaking, Sitā laid her lord's feet upon her heart and entered into the fire. She left her image there, of just the same form and modest disposition as her own. Not even Laksman knew the secret of what the Blessed Lord had done.

Rāvan, the vile, self-interested scoundrel, went to see Mārīca and bowed to him. When a base creature bends, there is trouble in store, as in the case of an elephant-goad, a bow, a serpent or a cat; and the ingratiating speech of a rascal, Bhavānī, is as ominous as flowers that bloom out of season.

[D. 24.] Mārīca did him reverence and respectfully asked him why he had come: 'Why, sire, are you troubled and why have you come here all alone?' [C. 23.] The Ten-headed laid the whole matter before him and boastfully added, poor fool, 'Do you assume the deceptive guise of a deer to trick him so that I may carry off the princess.' To this he replied, 'Hearken, O Ten-headed; he is the Lord of all creation in the form of man; fight not with him, sire; the power of life and death is in his hand. It was this prince who went to protect the sage's sacrifice; Raghupati struck me with a headless arrow so that in a moment I was hurled a thousand miles. No good can come of waging war with him. Ever since then I have been like an insect caught by a bee;<sup>1</sup> I see the two brothers wherever I look; even if he be only a man, sire, he is a mighty hero and it will not be well to quarrel with him. [D. 25.] Can such a valiant champion, who slew Tārakā and Subāhu, and broke Hara's bow, and then killed Khara, Dūṣaṇa and Triśirā, be mere man? [C. 24.] Think then of the welfare of your family and go home.'

These words infuriated Rāvan and he poured out torrents of abuse: 'You fool, do you venture to preach to me like a *guru*? Tell me, what warrior is there in the world like me?' Then Mārīca thought to himself, 'There are nine it were better not to oppose—an armed man, one who knows one's secrets, an overlord, a fool, a

<sup>1</sup> *bhringa* or *bhringi*: a large black bee. It is said to catch a grub, cover it with earth and sit on it; it then keeps stinging it, ceaselessly buzzing the while. This treatment results in the grub becoming just like the bee.

wealthy man, a doctor, a bard, a poet and a cook'.<sup>1</sup> When he saw that he was doomed to death, whatever he did, he looked to Raghunāyak for shelter. 'If I refuse,' he thought, 'this villain will slay me; so why should I not die by the stroke of Raghupati's shaft?' So thinking to himself, he went with the Ten-headed, but his devotion to Rāma's feet was unbroken. In his heart was an overpowering joy: 'Today I shall behold my best-beloved.' But he said not a word of it to Rāvan.

[Ch. 7.] 'I shall behold my best-beloved and gladden my eyes with the sight of him! I shall devote my soul to the feet of the gracious Lord, together with Sītā and his brother! He whose very wrath confers celestial bliss and whom, though free, devotion binds, Hari, the ocean of joy, will with his own hands fit an arrow to his bow and slay me!' [D. 26.] As he runs after me over the ground with bow and arrows in his hand, I shall turn round again and again and look upon my Lord. There is no other so blessed as I!'

[C. 25.] The Ten-headed drew near to the wood. Then Mārīca disguised himself, taking the form of a deer, indescribably marvellous; a body of gold he fashioned, studded with gems. Sītā spied the wondrous lovely deer, whose every limb was clothed in fairest beauty. 'Hearken, Raghubir, my gracious lord,' said the princess of Videha; 'most lovely is the skin of that deer. O Lord, ever true to your word, slay it and bring me its hide!'

Raghupati understood why this was done and gladly rose to fulfil the purpose of the gods. Watching the deer, he girded up his loins, took bow in hand and fitted thereto a fair shaft. Then spoke the Lord to Lakṣman and warned him: 'Brother, in the forest roam demons in great numbers. Watch over Sītā, using thought and judgement or force, as need arises.'

The deer fled at the sight of the Lord, but Rāma fitted an arrow to his bow and pursued it. He whom the Veda calls 'Not thus', whom Śiva cannot grasp by contemplation, chased the illusory deer. Now near, now far, it fled; and now it showed itself and now lay hid; appearing and hiding, many a wile it practised, and thus drew the Lord far away. Then Rāma aimed and shot a fatal arrow; with a fearful cry the deer fell to the ground. First, it called on Lakṣman's name, then thought in its heart of Rāma. As it gave up its life, it revealed its proper form and thought with love of

<sup>1</sup> *bhānasa gunī*: explained by the *śikā* as *rasoiyā*. Some read *mānasa gamī*, explained as *guruvān pandita*.

Rāma. The all-wise Lord recognized the love it bore him in its heart and granted it that liberation which even sages hardly win.

[D. 27.] The gods rained down showers of blossoms and sang in praise of the Lord's perfections, for that Raghunāth, friend of the humble, had bestowed on a demon a place in his own realm.

[C. 26.] When he had slain the demon, Raghubir at once turned back, glorious with bow in hand and quiver at his side. When Sītā heard the cry of woe, she said to Laksman in sore affright, 'Make haste and go; your brother is in dire peril!' 'Hearken, mother,' said Laksman with a smile: 'is it possible that he by the play of whose eyebrows creation is dissolved should fall into trouble?' But when Sītā spoke wounding words, Laksman's resolve, under Hari's influence, was shaken. Committing all to the care of the gods of the forest and the quarters, he went to find Rāma, that Rāhu to Rāvan's moon.

Meanwhile the Ten-headed, seeing Sītā deserted, seized the opportunity and approached her in the guise of an ascetic. He for fear of whom gods and demons sleep not by night, nor eat by day, he, the Ten-headed, glancing furtively this way and that like a dog, came to steal. Now that he had set forth, Garur, on this evil path, all bodily vigour, reason and strength deserted him. He told her charming tales of every sort; he held out lures of royal power; he threatened her and spoke of love. But Sītā said, 'Hearken, sir anchorite! You speak like a scoundrel!' Then Rāvan displayed his proper form, and when he declared his name, Sītā was sore afraid; but summoning up resolute courage, she said, 'Villain, stand where you are! The Lord has come! As a poor little hare that would woo a lioness, so, Demon King, would you woo me, driven on by Doom!' When the Ten-headed heard her defiance, he was enraged, yet found delight in mental adoration of her feet.

[D. 28.] Then Rāvan in a fury seized her and set her in his chariot; in anxious haste he drove along the path of the sky, and yet could scarcely drive the chariot for fear.

[C. 27.] 'Ah, Raghurāya,' she cried, 'unmatched for valour in the world! For what fault of mine have you withheld your pity? Dispeller of woe, bringing bliss to the suppliant! Ah, sun to the lotus race of Raghu! Ah, Laksman, it was no fault of yours! I was angry and have reaped the fruit of wrath!' Many a lamentation Sītā uttered. 'My lord is a lord of boundless mercy; he loves me but is far away. Who can tell my lord of my distress? That an ass should devour the food of the sacrifice!'

When they heard Sītā's grievous moans, all creatures, moving and unmoved, were sad. The king of the vultures heard her cries of woe and recognized her for the wife of the glory of the house of Raghu. The vile demon was carrying her away like a dun cow in a barbarian's power. 'Fear not, Sītā, my daughter,' he cried; 'I will slay this demon!' In a fury the bird launched his attack like a thunderbolt hurled upon a mountain. 'Ho there, villain! Stop, won't you! How dare you go on your way? Don't you know who I am?'

When the Ten-headed saw him coming on like death, he turned and thought, 'Is this Maināka or the king of birds, who has experienced my might, as also has his master?' But when he knew it was only old Jatāyu, he said, 'He will put off his body at my hands, as at a holy place of pilgrimage!'

When he heard this boast, the vulture sped on full of fury and cried, 'Rāvan, heed my warning! Give up Jānakī and go home in peace; or else, Many-armed, thus it will be—the whole of your race will be but a moth in the exceeding fierce flame of Rāma's wrath!' The Ten-headed warrior answered not a word.

Then indeed the vulture flew at him in a rage. He seized his hair and hurled him from the chariot, and the demon fell to the ground. Then, sheltering Sītā, the vulture turned again; with his beak he smote and tore his body, and Rāvan lay in a swoon for the space of half an hour. Then the demon gnashed his teeth with rage; he drew his very fearful scimitar and cut off the vulture's wings; the bird fell to the ground with his thoughts on Rāma's wondrous acts.

The demon placed Sītā again in his chariot and hastily drove off in no little alarm. Sītā went on through the sky, making lamentation like a frightened deer in the power of a huntsman. When she saw monkeys sitting on a hill, she dropped her outer robe with the name of Hari on her lips. Thus did Rāvan carry off Sītā and set her in a grove of *asoka* trees.

[D. 29a.] The villain played upon her fears and lavished words of love but failed to gain his end. Then with all care he seated her beneath an *asoka* tree, [29b.] and there Sītā remained, constantly repeating the name of Hari and laying the Lord Rāma's beauteous form upon her heart, as he appeared when chasing the pretended deer.

[C. 28.] When Raghupati saw his brother coming, he felt, or seemed to feel, profound anxiety. 'Brother,' he cried, 'have you

left Janak's daughter all alone and come hither in defiance of my command? The woods are full of roaming demons and I fear Sītā is no longer in the hermitage!' His brother clasped his lotus feet and exclaimed with folded hands, 'Lord, it is no fault of mine!' The Lord went with his brother to the hermitage on the bank of the Godāvarī, and when he saw that Jānaki was not there, he was wretched and distressed like any ordinary mortal. He cried, 'Alas for Jānaki, the queen of virtue! Alas for Sītā, the pure perfection of beauty, goodness, faithfulness and loyal love!'

Lakṣman attempted to console him, but he questioned all the trees and creepers as he went, 'O ye birds and beasts, O ye swarms of bees, have you seen the fawn-eyed Sītā? Wagtails, parrots and doves, deer and fish, swarming bees and clever cuckoos, jasmine buds and pomegranates, the lightning flash, the lotus and the autumn moon, the serpent, Varuṇa's noose, Kāma's bow, the swan, the elephant and the lion can now hear their own praises sung; the wood-apple, gold and the plantain rejoice, without the least doubt or diffidence in their hearts. Hearken, Jānaki! Now that you are no longer here they are all as happy as if they had won a kingdom.<sup>1</sup> How can you endure their envious joy? Why do you not haste to show yourself, beloved?' Thus did her Lord search for her with tears, like some poor lover who had lost his love. Rāma, who knows no unsatisfied desire, Very joy, from everlasting, indestructible, was acting like a mortal man.

As he went on, he saw the Vulture King lying on the ground, meditating on Rāma's feet and the marks they bore. [D. 30.] Raghubir, the ocean of grace, stroked his head with his lotus hands, and when he looked on the wondrous beauty of Rāma's face, he felt no more pain.

[C. 29.] Then the vulture took courage and said, 'Hearken, Rāma, dispeller of the dread of birth and death! Lord, it is the Ten-headed who has wrought this evil; it is that scoundrel who has carried off Janak's daughter. He took her, master, towards the south, crying as piteously as an osprey. It was only to see you, my lord, that I have kept alive, and now, O treasure-house of mercy, my life would take its flight.' Said Rāma, 'Remain alive, my friend.' But he replied with a smile, 'He by the mention of whose name at the last hour even the lowest creature wins release—so say the

<sup>1</sup> Poets compare the features and limbs of beautiful women to the objects here mentioned. Now that Sītā has disappeared they no longer have a rival to fear.

scriptures—stands now before my eyes. What more have I to hope for, Lord, that I should cling to life ?' With eyes full of tears Raghurāī replied, 'Friend, by your own good deeds have you won salvation. Those in whose hearts dwells desire for the good of others find nothing in the world too hard to win. So, friend, put off your body and depart to my realm; what else can I bestow on you ? You have all you desire. [D. 31.] But say nothing, friend, to my father of the rape of Sītā when you arrive. The Ten-headed himself, together with all his house, will come and tell him of it, as sure as I am Rāma !'

[C. 30.] Quitting his vulture body, he put on the form of Hari, brilliantly bedecked with jewels and clad in yellow, with dark-hued body and four long arms; and with eyes full of tears he sang this hymn of praise :

[Ch. 8.] 'Glory to Rāma of matchless beauty, impersonal, personal, from whom in very truth the elements proceed ! Thou sendest forth thy mighty arrows to shatter the mighty arms of the Ten-headed ! Glory of earth ! Him I ever adore whose hue is that of the rain-burdened cloud, whose face is like the lotus, whose large eyes are like lotus flowers, Rāma, the gracious, the long-armed, saviour from the dread of birth and death !

'Him I ever adore whose strength is measureless, without beginning or origin, unmanifest, sole, beyond perception, Govinda, transcending sense, destroyer of the pairs,<sup>1</sup> the sum of mystic wisdom, supporter of the earth, gladdener of the souls of his servants the saints who ceaselessly repeat the charm of Rāma's Name, even Rāma, friend of the desireless, vanquisher of lust and the whole host of evils !

'He whom the scriptures hymn as void of emotion, the Absolute, all-pervading, passionless, unborn; he to whom sages attain by contemplation, knowledge, detachment and various austerities, has now revealed himself in infinite mercy and splendour to charm all creation; and the beauty of many a Kāmadeva glows in his limbs that are bees to the lotus of my heart !

'May he who is both inaccessible and accessible, of purest being, different and like, and ever tranquil, whom ascetics behold when they toilfully and ceaselessly subdue their minds and senses, even that Rāma, Laks̄mi's lord, ruler of the three worlds, ever subject

<sup>1</sup> dvandva: the pairs, or opposites, are pain and pleasure, heat and cold, etc. Cf. Bhagavadgītā, ii. 45, v. 3, vii. 27, 28, xv. 5.

to his servants, whose sanctifying glory abolishes rebirth, dwell in my heart !'

[D. 32.] Asking for the boon of perpetual faith, the vulture departed to Hari's realm, and with his own hand Rāma performed his obsequies with all due ceremony. [C. 31.] Raghunāth, very tender-hearted, compassionate to the humble and gracious to the undeserving, bestowed upon a vulture, a vile flesh-eating bird, that salvation which ascetics crave. Hearken, Umā; unblest are they who turn from Hari to devote themselves to carnal pleasures !

The two brothers went on in their search for Sītā, examining the dense thickets of the forest. The woods were thick with trees and creepers and swarmed with birds and beasts, elephants and lions. As he went on his way, Rāma overthrew Kabandha, who told him the whole story of the curse : ' Durvāsā cursed me, but now that I have seen my Lord's feet my sin has been blotted out.' 'Hearken, Gandharva,' said Rāma; 'I declare to you that I am not pleased with those who injure Brāhmans. [D. 33.] He who in thought and word and deed does sincere service to those gods on earth may command myself and Brahmā and Śiva and all the other deities. [C. 32.] A Brāhmaṇ is to be reverenced even though he curse and beat you and use harsh words—so say the saints. A Brāhmaṇ must be revered though he be devoid of goodness or virtue, but a Śūdra never, however virtuous and learned.' So saying, he taught him his own doctrine and was pleased to see his devotion to his feet. Bowing before the lotus feet of Raghupati, he regained his own proper estate and passed to heaven.

When the generous Rāma had granted him salvation, he went on to the hermitage of the Śavari. When the Śavari saw that Rāma had come to her house, she remembered the words of the sage and was glad. There were the two comely brothers, one dark, the other fair, with lotus eyes, long arms, a crown of knotted hair upon their heads and garlands of forest flowers upon their breasts. The Śavari fell down and clung to their feet. She was so overcome by love that she could not speak, but again and again bowed her head before their lotus feet. Reverently she brought water and washed their feet and then conducted them to honourable seats. [D. 34.] She brought and offered to Rāma bulbs and roots and fruit, very delicious, and the Lord lovingly partook of them with many words of praise.

[C. 33.] She stood with folded hands before him and as she gazed upon the Lord, her love grew ever greater. 'How can I praise

you ?' she said. 'I am a woman of low caste and altogether ignorant, the lowest of the low and—lower still—a woman, and of women, too, the dullest, O enemy of sin !' 'Hearken, lady, to my words,' said Raghupati; 'there is but one relationship I recognize—the relationship of faith. Caste, family, religion, high degree, wealth, power, connexions, virtue and accomplishments—a man who has all these but has no faith is like a cloud that has no water. I declare to you the nine practices of faith; listen attentively and lay them up in your heart.

'The first is fellowship with the saints; the second, devotion to the stories that concern myself; [D. 35.] the third is selfless service to the *guru's* lotus feet; the fourth, the guileless hymning of all my virtues; [C. 34.] the fifth, the repetition of my mystic Name and firm belief in me—a practice famous in the *Veda*; the sixth, self-control and goodness and detachment from much business, with ceaseless devotion to the duties of the good; the seventh, to see the world in every part instinct with me and to regard the saints as greater even than myself; the eighth, to be content with what one has and never to dream of looking for faults in others; the ninth, a genuine simplicity in one's dealings with all, a heartfelt trust in me and to feel neither exultation nor despondency.

'Any who practises but one among these nine—man or woman, animate or inanimate—is very dear to me; and, lady, all these kinds of faith are found in you. Therefore this day you may with ease attain that blessed state which ascetics scarcely reach. The vision of myself brings with it this most incomparable reward, that the individual soul attains to its own original form. But tell me, lady, have you any tidings of the graceful daughter of Janak ?'

'Go, Raghurāī, to Lake Pampā; there you will make friends with Sugrīva, and he will tell you everything, divine Raghubīr. You ask me though you know all, O steadfast of soul !' Again and again she bowed her head before the feet of the Lord and lovingly repeated the whole story of her life.

[Ch. 9.] She repeated the whole story of her life, and gazing on Hari's face and laying on her heart his lotus feet, she abandoned her body in the sacrificial fire and became absorbed in Hari's beatific state whence there is no return.

(O men, forsake your works, unrighteousness and all your many creeds, which only end in sorrow, and in full confidence devote

yourselfs to Rāma's feet! [D. 36.] He granted liberation to a woman like that, of such low caste and altogether born in sin. O foolish, foolish soul! Do you expect peace if you pay no heed to such a Lord?)

[C. 35.] Rāma left that wood and went on his way, he and his brother, two lion-like heroes of unparalleled strength. The Lord was mourning like a lover who had lost his love and discoursed in various parables: 'See, Laksman, the beauty of the forest; whose heart is not disquieted to see it? For all the birds and beasts have their mates with them and seem to be reproaching me. When the herds of deer see us and would flee, their does cry, "You have no cause to fear; rest easy, you are deer by birth; it is a golden deer that these have come to seek!" The elephants keep their cows close beside them, as though they were teaching me a lesson: "However carefully the scriptures are studied, they must be read over again and again; however well a king may be served, one can never regard him as subject to one's influence; and though one keep a wife next one's heart, if she be young, she is no more mastered than the scriptures or a king." See, brother, how beautiful is the spring, but, bereft of my beloved, I look on it with dread.

[D. 37a.] 'Kāmadeva, finding me distressed by my loss and thinking me powerless and quite alone, has sped to the assault with the aid of the woods, the bees and the birds. [37b.] But his spy has seen that I am with my brother; and hearing this, the god of love has seemed to check his army and pitch his camp.

[C. 36.] 'The tangled creepers in the spreading trees seem like so many tents that he has pitched; the plantains and palms are his splendid flags and standards, amazing all but the boldest; and all the varied flowering trees are his archers, arrayed in different uniforms; on this side and on that stand trees of wondrous beauty, looking like the several encampments of fighting men. The koels' voices are as the trumpeting of maddened elephants; the cranes and cuckoos are his camels and mules; the peacocks, partridges and parrots are his mettlesome horses, the pigeons and swans his Arab steeds; the sand-grouse and quails are his squadrons of foot; no tongue can describe Kāmadeva's hosts; the mountain crags are his chariots, the waterfalls his drums, the pied cuckoos the bards that chant his praises; the buzzing bees are his bugles and hautboys; the winds, soft, cool and fragrant, are his spies. Thus with his army of horses, elephants, chariots and foot he goes about

inciting all to battle. O Laksman, those who can stand their ground when they look on Kāmadeva's troops are valiant indeed! His one supreme reliance is on Woman, and he who can escape her toils is indeed a mighty warrior!

[D. 38a.] 'Brother, there are three enemies of irresistible might—lust, wrath and greed. These overthrow in the twinkling of an eye the souls of sages that are the homes of wisdom. [38b.] The power of greed lies in desire and pride, of lust in woman only; the power of wrath lies in harsh words; this is the considered opinion of great sages.'

[C. 37.] O Umā, Rāma transcends the elements of nature; he is Lord of all creation and reads the secrets of all hearts. Thus did he lay bare the wretched state of the lustful and confirm the detachment of the steadfast. Wrath, lust, greed, pride and delusion are all exterminated by the mercy of Rāma; that man is not deceived by this stage-trickery to whom the great illusionist grants his grace. I declare to you, Umā, my conclusion; the worship of Hari is reality, the whole world is but a dream.

The Lord went on to the shore of the lake named Pampā, beautiful and deep. Its water was as pure as the hearts of saints and round it were built four charming flights of steps; and everywhere all kinds of animals were drinking the water like crowds of beggars at a generous man's door. [D. 39a.] Under its dense covering of lotus leaves the water could no more easily be discerned than the impersonal Absolute veiled by illusion. [39b.] In the lake's profound depths all the fish enjoyed undisturbed tranquillity, just as days pass on in peace for righteous men.

[C. 38.] Lotuses of diverse hues were in full bloom, and swarms of buzzing bees made sweet melody. Water-fowl and swans were uttering their notes as though they saw the Lord and were singing his praises. So many were the cakavās and cranes and other birds that no one could describe them; they had to be seen to be believed. The charming notes of all these lovely birds seemed to invite the travellers as they came. Near by the lake hermits had thatched their huts, and all around stood magnificent forest trees, *campā* and *maulasirī*, *kadamba*, *tamāla*, *pāṭala*,<sup>1</sup> jackfruit, *dhāk* and mango. All sorts of trees were there, with new leaves and blossoms, and swarms of bees were humming round them. Cool, soft and fragrant winds were ever blowing there most

<sup>1</sup> *Bignonia*, or trumpet-flower.

pleasantly. 'Kuhoo ! Kuhoo !' sang the koels, and sages broke off their contemplation at the sound of their melodious notes. [D. 40.] Burdened with fruit, the trees all bowed down to the ground, as liberal men bow humbly in time of great prosperity.

[C. 39.] When Rāma beheld this most lovely lake, he bathed in it with very great enjoyment, and spying a beautiful tree, Raghurāya and his brother sat down beneath its shade. Thither all the gods and sages came once more and, after singing his praises, departed each to his own home.

The gracious Lord was sitting there very happily and recounting romantic legends to his brother when Nārada, seeing the Blessed Lord bereft of his beloved, was much disquieted. 'It is in acceptance of the curse I pronounced,' he thought, 'that Rāma is bearing this burden of grief. I must go and see so gracious a Lord, for I shall never find so fair an opportunity again.' Thus reflecting, Nārada, lute in hand, went to the spot where the Lord was seated at ease. Singing in dulcet tones the acts of Rāma he came, lovingly chanting his praises. As he prostrated himself, Rāma raised him and held him for a long time clasped to his bosom. He asked him how he fared and seated him by his side, and Laksman reverently washed his feet.

[D. 41.] Perceiving that the Lord was graciously inclined, Nārada with many a humble prayer folded his lotus hands and said, [C. 40.] 'Hear me, Raghunāyak, whose nature it is to be generous; beautiful, difficult yet easy to approach, giver of gracious gifts ! Grant me one boon; I crave it, master, though you who know the secrets of all hearts already know it.'

'Sage,' he replied, 'indeed you know my nature; do I ever hide aught from my servants ? What thing is there so dear to me that you, great sage, cannot ask for it ? There is nothing I cannot grant my servants; be sure of this and never waver in your confidence.'

Then Nārada was glad and said, 'This is the boon I venture presumptuously to ask. Though the Lord's names are many and scripture declares each to be more potent than another, let the name "Rāma" be greatest of all names, a fowler, Lord, to snare the many birds of sin ! [D. 42a.] May your name "Rāma" be as the full moon in the moonlit night of faith, and may your other names abide like stars in the clear sky of your worshippers' hearts !'

[42b.] 'Be it even so !' replied the gracious Raghunāth to the sage. Then Nārada was exceeding glad and bowed his head before the feet of the Lord.

[C. 41.] Perceiving that Raghunāth was in very gracious mood, Nārada spoke yet again in gentle tones: 'O Rāma, when you sent forth your illusion and misled me—hearken, Raghurāya—I was desirous at that time to wed. Why, Lord, did you not allow me to do so ?'

'Hearken, O sage,' said the Lord; 'most gladly<sup>1</sup> will I tell you. Those who worship me, relying on none other, I ever guard as a mother guards her child. If an infant runs to catch hold of the fire or a snake, the mother holds it back and rescues it. But when her son grows up, his mother loves him still but treats him differently. The wise are like my grown-up sons, but my servants who rely not on themselves are like my infant children. My servant depends upon my strength, the wise man on his own, but both have lust and anger for their foes. With this in mind the learned worship me and even when they have attained to wisdom forsake not their devotion.'

[D. 43.] 'Lust, wrath, greed, pride and all the other passions form the strong army of infatuation; but amongst them all the most dangerous and tormenting foe is woman, illusion incarnate. [C. 42.] Hearken, sage; the Purāṇas and the Vedas and the saints declare that woman is the season of spring to the forest of delusion; and every woman, like the summer heat, dries up all the pools of prayer and penance and religious observance. Lust and wrath and pride and jealousy are frogs and she alone the rains to gladden them. Evil inclinations are a bed of lilies and she the autumn ever to cherish them. All forms of religion are like lotuses, withered by sensual woman as by the frost of winter. Woman, again, is the cool season fostered by which the *jāvāsa* grove of selfishness flourishes. Woman is a night, impenetrably dark, to bring delight to all the owls of sin; a hook to catch all the fish of sense and strength and goodness and truth; so say the wise. [D. 44.] A young and wanton woman is the root of all evil, a torment and the source of every woe. That was what I had in mind, O sage, when I stood in your way.'

[C. 43.] When he heard Raghupati's kindly words, the sage trembled with emotion and his eyes filled with tears. 'Tell me,' he cried, 'what Lord is there like this whose property is to show

<sup>1</sup> *saharosa*: thus translated by the *sikhd*. There seems to be some doubt about the meaning of the word, some commentators suggesting *śūratā-pūrvaka* or *satya samkalpa kara*. The dictionary meaning, 'angrily', is not applicable to the context.

such love and affection to a servant ? Those who turn not from error to worship such a Lord are destitute of wisdom, luckless fools !' Then reverently said Nārada the sage, 'Hear me, Rāma, master of mystic wisdom ! Tell me, Lord Raghubir, destroyer of the dread of birth and death, what are the special characteristics of the saints ?'

'Listen, O sage, while I describe the qualities of the saints whereby they bind me to their service. They have conquered the six disorders;<sup>1</sup> they know no sin or wrong desire; they stand unmoved, possessing naught, perfectly pure and tranquil; of boundless wisdom, utterly content, abstemious; inspired devotees of truth, scholarly, ascetic; prudent, honouring others and devoid of arrogance; patient, supremely wise in the ways of righteousness; [D. 45.] perfectly virtuous, free from the troubles of the world, undisturbed by doubt, holding dear neither life nor home but only my lotus feet. [C. 44.] They shrink from hearing their own praises and rejoice beyond measure to hear the praises of others; equable and calm, persistent in right conduct, straightforward and charitable to all; regular in prayer and penance and vows, subdual of sense, restraint and religious observance; devoted to the feet of their *guru*, Govinda and Brāhmans; faithful, compassionate, friendly, merciful and cheerful. They love me most sincerely; perfect in detachment, discernment, humility and spiritual wisdom, with right knowledge of Veda and Purāna. They display no pride or self-conceit or arrogance, nor ever dream of setting foot upon the path of vice. They are ever singing or listening to my sportive acts; unselfishly devoted to the good of others. Believe me, O sage, not even Śāradā or scripture can enumerate all the qualities that distinguish the saints. [Ch. 10.] No, not even Śāradā or Śeṣa can tell them !'

Hearing this, Nārada clasped his lotus feet, exclaiming, 'Thus has the gracious friend of the lowly proclaimed with his own lips the virtues of his votaries !' Bowing his head again and again before his feet, Nārada departed to the realm of Brahmā.

(Blessed are they who turn from all other hope and devote themselves to Hari ! [D. 46a.] Those who sing or hear the holy praise of Rāvan's foe win to steadfast faith in Rāma, even without detachment, prayer or ascetic practices. [46b.] A young woman is like the flame of a lamp. O soul, be not as the moth ! Abandon lust and pride, worship Rāma and ever seek the fellowship of the saints !)

<sup>1</sup> *sāya vikāra*: these are *kāma*, lust; *krodha*, anger; *lobha*, greed; *moha*, delusion; *matara*, jealousy; *mada*, pride.

## KIŚKINDHĀ

[**Slōka.**] May the two fair scions of the house of Raghu, one fair as the jasmine, one dark as the dark-blue lotus, both beautiful and very strong, in whom all wisdom dwells, glorious archers, praised in scripture, friends of cows and Brāhmans, who by illusory power have taken the form of men, bucklers of the holy faith, beneficent, wayfarers in earnest search of Sītā, grant us devotion !

Blessed are those doers of good deeds who ever quaff the nectar of holy Rāma's Name, churned up from the sea of the Veda, cleansing the Kaliyuga of its pollution, indestructible, gleaming ever on the fair and beauteous moon of holy Śambhu's face, most grateful potion to heal the ills of life and death, the very life of holy Jānakī !

[**Sorathā.**] a. How can that Kāśi not be reverenced where Śambhu and Bhavānī dwell, as liberation's motherland, source of all wisdom, abolisher of sin ?  
b. Do you not worship him, O foolish soul, who drank the deadly poison from whose burning potency the whole host of heaven was suffering ? Who is so merciful as Śamkara ?

[**C. 1.**] Raghurāya again went on and drew near to the hill of Risyamūka. There dwelt Sugrīva with his ministers. When he saw the brothers of matchless and unbounded might approaching, he cried in dire alarm, 'Hearken, Hanumān ! Here come two men of wondrous strength and beauty. Assume the form of a Brāhmaṇ student and go and see them, and when you are sure who they are, acquaint me by a sign. If they have been sent by Bāli with evil intent, then I must leave this hill and flee at once.'

The monkey took a Brāhmaṇ form and approached them; he bowed his head and thus he questioned them: 'Who are you, warriors, one dark, one fair of hue, who roam the forest in Kṣatriya guise ? Hard is the ground for your soft feet to tread; why wander you in the woods, my masters ? Your bodies are delicate, charming and handsome; in the forest you endure heat and wind, ill to bear. Are you some two of the three gods or are you Nara and Nārāyaṇa, or are you Lords of all the spheres, [**D. 1.**] first causes of the world,

incarnate as men to bear souls across the ocean of birth and death and relieve earth of its burdens ?'

[C. 2.] 'We are the sons of Daśarath, king of Kosala, and we have come to the forest in obedience to our father's command. Our names are Rāma and Laksman and we are brothers, and with me was my bride, delicate and lovely; but in the forest a demon rapt away the princess of Videha. It is in search of her, O Brāhmaṇ, that we wander. We have told you our story; now tell us and acquaint us, Brāhmaṇ, with your own.'

Hanumān recognized the Lord and fell and clasped his feet. His joy, Umā, no tongue can tell. He trembled with emotion, nor could he utter a word as he gazed on the form of their charming disguise. Then composing himself, he sang their praises; glad was he at heart when he recognized his Lord. 'Master, for me it was fitting to inquire, but how should you make question like a man? By the power of your magic I lost my wandering wits and that is why I did not know my Lord. [D. 2.] In the first place, I am slow of wit, the slave of ignorance, perverse of heart and foolish. Then, too, you, my Blessed Lord, friend of the humble, led me astray. [C. 3.] Master, though many a fault be found in me, yet let not my Lord forget his servant. Lord, the soul of man is bewildered by your illusive power; only your grace can release it. Moreover, I swear by Raghubir, I know no mode of worship. A servant dwells secure if he have confidence in his master, and a son if he trusts his mother; even so can the Lord protect his own.' So saying, he fell at his feet, overcome by emotion. He revealed his natural form and his heart overflowed with love.

Then Raghupati raised him and clasped him to his breast, and refreshed him with streams of tears from his own eyes. 'Hearken, monkey,' he said; 'yield not to despair. You are twice as dear to me as Laksman. All men call me impartial, but that servant is dear to me who looks to none other for salvation. [D. 3.] He, Hanumān, looks to me only whose faith never wavers that he is the servant and God the master, whose form is all created things.'

[C. 4.] Seeing his Lord so graciously inclined, the Son of the Wind rejoiced at heart and felt no more uneasiness. 'Lord,' he said, 'on this hill there dwells the Monkey King, Sugrīva; he is your servant. Make friends with him, Lord, and reassure him, for he is humble. He will set in motion the search for Sitā and send ten million monkeys in all directions.' Thus he explained the whole situation and mounted both the brothers on his back.

When Sugrīva saw Rāma, he fervently blessed the day that he was born. He greeted him with reverence, bowing his head before his feet, and Raghunāth and his brother embraced him. This was the thought in the monkey's mind, 'O God, will these offer me their friendship?' [D. 4.] Then Hanumān declared all that had to be said on either side, and calling on fire to bear witness, concluded a firm alliance of mutual aid.

[C. 5.] The alliance thus concluded, they hid nothing from one another. Laksman told Sugrīva all that Rāma had done, and when he heard it, he said with tears in his eyes, 'Lord, the daughter of the king of Mithilā will be found. I was sitting here one day with my ministers, deep in thought, when I beheld her travelling along the path of the sky in the power of an enemy, weeping bitterly and crying, "Rāma! Rāma! O Rāma!" When she saw me, she dropped her outer robe.' Rāma asked for it and Sugrīva gave it him at once. He pressed the robe to his bosom, greatly sorrowing. Sugrīva said, 'Hearken, Raghubir; sorrow no more but take heart; I will do all I can to help you to recover Jānaki.' [D. 5.] The mighty and merciful Lord was pleased to hear his ally's pledge. 'Tell me,' he said, 'why do you dwell in the forest, Sugrīva?'

[C. 6.] 'Lord,' he replied, 'Bāli and I are brothers. We were inexpressibly fond of one another. Then, Lord, came the son of Maya, Māyāvī by name, to our city. At midnight he shouted defiance at the city gate, and Bāli could not endure his enemy's insolent challenge. Out rushed Bāli, and at the sight of him the demon fled. Now I too had gone forth with my brother, and when the demon had entered a cave in the mountain, Bāli laid this charge upon me: "Wait for me for a fortnight, and if I come not out, assume that I have been slain." I waited there, Kharāri, for a whole month, and then there issued from the cave a great stream of blood. The demon has killed Bāli, I thought, and he will come and kill me too; so I set a rock at the mouth of the cave and fled. When the ministers saw that the city was left masterless, they crowned me king, whether I would or no; but it was Bāli who had slain the demon, and when he came home and saw me on the throne, he quarrelled with me violently. He gave me a sound beating as though I were his enemy and seized all I possessed, my wife as well. For fear of him, gracious Raghubir, I roamed through all the woods in a state of wretchedness, and though owing to a curse he cannot come here,<sup>1</sup> yet I live in terror still.'

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Dundubhi.

When the Lord of compassion heard his servant's tale of woe, his two long arms throbbed vehemently. [D. 6.] 'Hearken, Sugrīva,' he said; 'I will slay Bāli with a single shaft! Though he flee for refuge to Brahmā and Rudra, he shall not escape alive! [C. 7.] It is a grievous sin even to look on those who share not in the sorrows of a friend; if one's own troubles be as a mountain, one should regard them as a particle of dust; but though one's friend's troubles be as dust, one should think of them as Mount Sumeru. How can those mean fellows possibly be loyal friends in whom this view is not second nature? These are the marks of a true friend, as scripture declares; to divert one's friend from the path of evil and set his feet on the way of righteousness; to make known his virtues and conceal his faults; to show no bargaining and distrustful spirit but ever to help him to the best of one's power; and to love him a hundredfold in time of trouble. But if a man hypocritically speaks fair words to one's face and slanders one behind one's back, a man whose soul is crooked and whose mind moves tortuously like a snake, then, brother, it is better to have no dealings with such a disloyal friend. A dishonest servant, a niggardly king, an adulterous wife and a treacherous friend—these four are like pointed weapons. Rely on me, my friend, and set your mind at rest, for I shall help you to complete success.'

'But listen, Raghubir,' said Sugrīva; 'Bāli is a very strong and courageous warrior.' He showed him Dundubhi's bones and the palm-trees,<sup>1</sup> but Raghunāth without an effort hurled the bones away. When he marked his boundless strength, he became even more devoted to him and confident that he would slay Bāli. Again and again the Monkey King bowed his head before his feet and rejoiced to acknowledge him as his Lord.

Then, when wisdom had thus dawned upon his soul, he spoke and said, 'Lord, of your grace my mind is set at rest. I shall abandon all delights, wealth, kinsfolk and dignities to serve you only; for all these things are hindrances to faith in Rāma, so say the saints who worship your feet. Friend and foe, pleasure and pain, are but creations of illusion in the world, not true realities. Bāli has proved to be my greatest friend, O Rāma, for it is by his favour that I have met you, the vanquisher of sorrow; as when one dreams that one is fighting, and when one wakes and realizes who has been one's foe, one feels ashamed. Now, Lord, grant me this grace that I may leave all to worship you day and night.'

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Dundubhi.

When he heard the monkey's ascetic vow, Rāma with bow in hand smiled as he replied, 'All you have said is true; yet, friend, what I have promised will come to pass.'

Rāma, O king of birds, makes all men dance like an acrobat with his monkeys—so says the Veda.

Then taking Sugrīva with him, Raghunāth advanced, carrying his bow and arrows in his hand. Raghupati sent Sugrīva forward, and he went up close and roared aloud, relying on Rāma's might. Bāli heard him and was furious; he ran out, but his wife clasped his feet and warned him: 'Hear me, husband! The two brothers with whom Sugrīva has made alliance are unsurpassed in majesty and might. They are the sons of the king of Kosala, Laksman and Rāma, who can vanquish Death himself in battle.'

[D. 7.] 'Hearken,' said Bāli, 'my timid and beloved wife; Raghunāth looks with impartial eyes on all. If perchance he slay me, I shall have found my Lord.' [C. 8.] So saying, he marched forth in his great arrogance, caring not a straw for Sugrīva. The two closed; Bāli uttered terrible threats and roaring aloud struck him with his fist. Sugrīva fled in dismay, for the blow from Bāli's fist had struck him like a thunderbolt. 'Did I not tell you, gracious Raghubīr,' he cried, 'that he is not my brother but Death himself?' 'You two brothers look exactly alike,' said Rāma, 'and that is why I did not shoot him lest I should make a mistake.' He passed his hand over Sugrīva's body and it became hard as a thunderbolt and he felt no more pain. About his neck he cast a garland of flowers and sent him forth once more, bestowing on him irresistible strength. Again the battle raged, while Raghurāi watched from behind a tree.

[D. 8.] Sugrīva tried all sorts of cunning tricks, but at last his heart failed him for fear; then Rāma drew his bow and pierced Bāli's heart with an arrow. [C. 9.] Struck by the arrow, he fell helpless to the ground; but when he saw the Lord before him, he sat up. There he was, dark of hue, with his hair bound up in a knot upon his head, with dawn-bright eyes and arrow ready fitted to his bow. Gazing at him earnestly, Bāli laid his heart at his feet, and now that he recognized him as his Lord he was glad he had been born. There was devotion in his heart, but on his lips harsh words; looking towards Rāma, he said, 'You have come down from heaven, holy Lord, to further righteousness and yet you have shot me like some huntsman! Am I your enemy and Sugrīva your friend? For what fault, Lord, have you slain me?'

'Listen, poor fool,' said Rāma; 'a younger brother's wife, a sister, the wife of a son and a virgin maid are all alike; if any look on these with a lustful eye, in the slaying of him there is no sin. Fool! So boundless is your arrogance that you would not lend your ear to your wife's warning; and though you knew Sugrīva was protected by my strong arm, you sought in your insolent pride to kill him!'

[D. 9.] 'Hearken, Rāma,' said Bāli; 'it is vain to practise craft upon my Lord; now that in my last hour, Lord, I have found shelter in your presence, am I still accounted guilty?'

[C. 10.] When Rāma heard this most pathetic plea, he touched Bāli's head with his own hands and said, 'I restore your body to health and soundness; remain alive!' But Bāli said, 'Hear me, most gracious Lord; in their successive lives sages make all endeavour, yet at their end they cannot utter the name of Rāma; that Rāma by the power of whose name Śāmkara at Kāsi bestows on all alike the gift of immortal life has come in visible form before my eyes. Can such an opportunity, Lord, ever be mine again?'

[Ch. 1.] 'He has come in visible form before my eyes whose praise the scriptures ever hymn as "Not thus"; he whom the sages hardly reach by contemplation, checking their breath, subduing their minds and abstracting their senses. Knowing me to be the slave of utter arrogance, the Lord has bidden me remain alive; but who would be such a fool as to cut down of set purpose the tree of Paradise to fence about a mere acacia? Now, Lord, look on me with compassion and grant the boon I ask. In whatsoever womb fate compels me to take my birth, may I be devoted to Rāma's feet. O Lord, giver of all good gifts, this my son Āngad is reverent and strong like myself; receive him, help him, O king of gods and men, and make him your own servant.'

[D. 10.] After reverencing Rāma's feet with earnest devotion Bāli quitted his body, as when a garland of flowers falls from an elephant's neck and he knows nothing of it; [C. 11.] and Rāma sent Bāli to his own realm.

All the citizens came running in dismay, and Tārā, half unconscious with dishevelled locks, broke forth into bitter cries of grief. Seeing Tārā so distraught, Raghurāya enlightened her and dispelled her delusion: 'Earth, water, fire, ether and air—of these five elements is this vile body composed. There before your eyes lies that body asleep, but the soul is undying; for whom, then, do you weep?' When wisdom had thus dawned on her, she touched his

feet and besought him for the boon of perfect faith. O Umā, the holy Lord Rāma makes all to dance like marionettes.

Then at Rāma's bidding Sugrīva performed all the obsequies with due ceremony. Next, Rāma gave orders to his brother to go and set Sugrīva on the throne. Then they all bowed their heads at Raghupati's feet and, as he charged them, departed. [D. 11.] Lakṣman at once called together the citizens and all the Brāhmans and set Sugrīva on the throne, with Āngad as Crown Prince.

[C. 12.] There is no *guru* in the world, O Umā, no father, mother, brother or lord so kind as Rāma. It is the way of all gods and men and sages to be friendly with motives of self-interest, but Raghubir with his wonted kindness made Sugrīva king of the monkeys, Sugrīva who day and night had lived in terror of Bāli and whose body was as sore with numberless wounds as his soul was racked with anxious care. Surely those who knowingly turn from such a Lord shall be caught in the toils of disaster!

Then Rāma summoned Sugrīva and instructed him in the details of statecraft: 'Hearken, Sugrīva, king of the monkeys,' said the Lord; 'I shall not enter a city for fourteen years. The hot weather is over and the rains have begun, so I shall stay near by on the hill. Do you reign, together with Āngad, but never for one moment forget my mission.' When Sugrīva had returned to his palace, Rāma encamped on Mount Pravarṣana, [D. 12.] where the gods had already prepared a delightful mountain cave, knowing that Rāma, the Lord of grace, would come and make his abode there for some days.

[C. 13.] The beautiful forest was very charming with blossoming flowers. Bees were buzzing, greedy for honey. Bulbs and roots and fruit and leaves grew in luxuriance from the day the Lord came there. Seeing the hill unequalled in beauty, the king of heaven rested there with his younger brother. Gods, adepts and sages, in the form of bees and birds and beasts, did service to the Lord, and from the day when Lakṣmi's lord made his dwelling there the forest became a home of perfect bliss.

There on a bright and glittering crystal rock the two brothers sat at ease. Rāma told his brother many tales of devotion and continence and the art of kingship and wise judgement. In the season of the rains clouds gathered in the sky and very pleasant was the sound of thunder.

[D. 13.] 'See, Lakṣman, how all the peacocks dance when they see the clouds, just as a householder devoted to austerity rejoices

when he sees a votary of Viṣṇu. [C. 14.] The clouds gather and thunder loudly in the sky; my heart is afraid, for my darling is not with me. The lightning flash rests not in the clouds, fickle as a villain's love. The clouds pour forth their rain, lowering over the earth, like wise men stooping beneath their load of learning. The hills endure the buffet of the rain-drops, as good men bear a scoundrel's taunts. The rivulets are full and burst their banks, like mean men who boast a little wealth. How foul becomes the water when it falls upon the ground, like the soul caught in the web of illusion! Drop by drop the waters gather and fill the ponds, as virtues come to a good man. The waters of the rivers flow into the sea where they rest moveless like a soul that has found Hari.

[D. 14.] 'The green earth is so covered with grass that the paths cannot be distinguished, as sacred books are obscured by the argumentations of heretics. [C. 15.] On every side is heard the pleasant croaking of the frogs, like a class of Brāhmaṇ students reciting the Veda. New leaves spring forth from all the trees, like wisdom that arises in the minds of aspirants. The *āka* and *javāsa* have shed their leaves, as in a well-governed kingdom the endeavours of the wicked come to nought. Search as you may, nowhere is dust to be found, as righteousness is banished by wrath. How lovely is the earth with its wealth of crops, like the riches of a liberal man! In the darkness of the cloudy night the fireflies gleam, as though a band of hypocrites had met together. The borders of the fields are broken down by the pelting rain, like women spoilt by independence. Provident farmers weed their land, as a wise man rids himself of ignorance, presumption and pride. The *cakavā* is nowhere to be seen, like righteousness that vanishes at the dawning of the Kaliyuga. On barren ground grass grows not though it rain, as lust comes not to birth in the heart of Hari's votary. Swarming with every kind of creature the earth is agleam, as subjects multiply in a well-ordered realm. Here and there rests many a weary traveller, as rest the senses when knowledge dawns.

[D. 15a.] 'Sometimes a strong wind blows and the clouds are scattered in all directions, as, when a wicked son is born, the piety of his family is destroyed. [15b.] Sometimes in the day there is thick darkness, sometimes the sun shines forth, as wisdom is ruined by bad company and comes to birth in the company of the good.

[C. 16.] 'But see, Laksman! The rains are over and autumn has begun! How charming it is! All the earth is covered with flowering silver grass, as though the rainy season were confessing

to old age. Canopus has risen and dried up the water on the roads, as satisfaction dries up greed. Pure and bright is the water of the rivers and the lakes, like a good man's heart that knows no wanton pride or ignorance. By slow degrees the water of river and lake dries up, as wise men forsake all thought of personal possession. The wagtails know it to be autumn and appear, like fair good deeds at the appointed time. There is no dust or mud; earth looks as bright as the acts of a king expert in governance. As the water sinks, the fish are agitated, like a foolish householder who loses his wealth. How pure and bright the cloudless sky, like Hari's devotee who has abandoned trust in any other ! Here and there falls a slight autumn shower, like those few who have faith in me.

[D. 16.] 'Now kings, ascetics, merchants and beggars leave the city and come forth gladly to their work, even as men of the four orders give up their various labours when they have won to faith in Hari.

[C. 17.] 'Happy are the fish when the water is deep, like those who take refuge in Hari without let or hindrance. Lovely are the ponds when the lotuses blossom, like the impersonal Absolute become personal. Buzzing bees hum melodiously and birds are uttering their sweet and varied notes; the *cakavā* looks sadly on the night, as a mean man looks on his neighbour's wealth. The cuckoo continually complains, so grievous is his thirst, like an enemy of Śāṅkara who finds no peace. In the night the moon dispels the autumn heat, as sin is abolished by the sight of a holy man. Flocks of partridges look up at the moon and fix their gaze upon it, as Hari's worshippers gaze on Hari when they find him. Gnats and mosquitoes perish for fear of the winter frost, as a family perishes if it do injury to Brāhmans. [D. 17.] The creatures that swarmed upon the earth have vanished now that autumn is here, as the swarms of doubt and error disappear when one finds a holy *guru*.

[C. 18.] 'The rains are over and the clear season of autumn is here, but, brother, we have no news of Sītā. If I could once hear tidings of her, however it might be, I should bring her back in a moment, though I should have to conquer Death himself. Wherever she may be, if she be still alive, brother, I shall strive to rescue her and bring her back. Now that Sugrīva is enjoying sovereignty and riches, life in a city and a wife, he has quite forgotten me. Tomorrow I shall slay the fool with that same arrow with which I killed Bāli !'

Can he really be wroth, Umā, by whose grace pride and delusion are dispelled? Only wise sages who are devoted to the feet of Raghubir can comprehend these his acts.

Lakṣman, believing that the Lord was angry, strung his bow and grasped his arrows. [D. 18.] Then Raghupati, whose compassion knows no bounds, instructed his brother, saying, 'Only threaten our friend Sugrīva, brother, and bring him here.'

[C. 19.] Meanwhile the Son of the Wind was thinking to himself that Sugrīva had forgotten Rāma's mission; so he approached him, and bowing his head before his feet, spoke of the four modes of conduct<sup>1</sup> and admonished him. Whereupon Sugrīva was terrified and said, 'It is carnal luxury that has robbed me of good sense; now, O Son of the Wind, send out numbers of envoys to all the monkeys wherever they may be, and tell them that anyone who does not come within a fortnight will meet death at my hand.' Then Hanumān sent for the envoys, and after receiving them very courteously he employed threats and persuasion and diplomacy. They all bowed their heads before his feet and sped away.

Just at that moment Lakṣman entered the city, and when they saw that he was angry, the monkeys fled in all directions. [D. 19.] He strung his bow and cried, 'I shall burn the city to ashes!' Then the son of Bāli, seeing that the whole city was confounded, came to him and bowed his head before his feet [C. 20.] and made humble petition. Lakṣman reassured him, but when the Monkey King heard of Lakṣman's anger, he was dreadfully frightened and said, 'Hearken, Hanumān; take Tārā with you and placate the prince with humble apologies.' Hanumān approached him with Tārā and doing homage to his feet, sang the Lord's praises and, reverently conducting him to the palace, washed his feet and seated him on a couch. Then the king of the monkeys bowed his head before his feet and Lakṣman took his hand and embraced him. 'Lord,' said Sugrīva, 'there is naught that intoxicates like luxury; in one moment it bemuses the soul of a sage.' Lakṣman was pleased with his humble apology, and said all he could to reassure him.

When the Son of the Wind had told him in detail how a multitude of envoys had gone forth, [D. 20.] Sugrīva joyfully set out with Āngad and the other monkeys, and with Rāma's brother to lead

<sup>1</sup> Rāma had already employed *sāma*, friendship, and *dāna*, gifts; there remained *danda*, punishment, and *bheda*, sowing of dissension, possibly a threat to make Āngad king.

the way, came to Raghunāth. [C. 21.] Sugrīva bowed his head before his feet and said with folded hands, 'Lord, it was no fault of mine. Your illusion, divine master, is irresistible, and only, O Rāma, when you show mercy is it dissipated. Gods, men and sages, Lord, are all liable to be mastered by objects of sense, and I am only a wretched animal—a monkey, too, a prey to lust! He who is not transfixed by the arrow of a woman's glance, he who keeps vigil in the dark night of fierce passion, he who lets not his neck be encircled by the noose of avarice, is like to yourself, O Raghurāya! Such integrity cannot be won by devotional exercises, but only by your grace do a few attain to it.' Then said Raghupati with a smile, 'You are as dear to me, my brother, as Bharat! Now then, make all diligent endeavour to get tidings of Sītā.'

[D. 21.] Thus were they conversing when throngs of monkeys arrived; multitudes of monkeys appeared from every quarter, monkeys of every hue. [C. 22.] I myself, Umā, saw the monkey host; only a fool would try to count them. They came and bowed at Rāma's feet, and when they saw his face all felt that they had found their Lord. There was not one single monkey in that army after whose welfare Rāma did not ask; and this was no great marvel for the Lord Raghurāi, of universal form and present everywhere. They stood all around at the word of command and Sugrīva addressed them all: 'On Rāma's behalf and at my request go forth, ye monkey squadrons, in all directions; go, search for Janak's daughter and return, my brothers, within one month; and if any one of you comes back after that period without tidings, I shall have him put to death.' [D. 22.] So at his bidding all the monkeys set out forthwith in every direction.

[C. 23.] Then Sugrīva summoned Aṅgad, Nala and Hanumān and said, 'Hearken, Nila, Aṅgad, Hanumān and Jāmbavān, resolute and prudent warriors all, go you to the south together and ask everyone for news of Sītā. Let all you think and say and do be centred in this one endeavour to bring Rāmacandra's mission to a successful issue. The sun must be served with the back and fire with the breast, but a master must be sincerely served with every part of one's being.<sup>1</sup> One must turn from things illusory and devote oneself to things spiritual, for thus are all those cares abo-

<sup>1</sup> Commentators offer a vast number of alternative interpretations of this obscure verse, many of them fantastic and absurd. The true meaning has been lost.

lished that spring from birth and death. Brothers, the end of this mortal life is to forsake all worldly desires and worship Rāma only. He only appreciates true virtue and is greatly blessed who is devoted to the feet of Raghubir.' They then took leave and, bowing their heads before his feet, went off rejoicing with Raghurāi in their thoughts.

Last of all, the Son of the Wind made his bow, and the Lord, knowing what he would do, called him to himself and, touching his head with his lotus hands, gave him the ring from his finger, trusty servant as he was, and said, 'Do all you can to comfort Sītā. Tell her of my might and the love I bear her in her absence and return with all speed.' Hanumān felt this to be the crowning moment of his life, and set out with the image of the gracious Lord laid upon his heart. Although the Lord knows all things, yet as protector of the gods he observed the rules of royal conduct.

[D. 23.] They all went forth, searching woods and rivers and lakes and hills and caves with their minds so absorbed in Rāma's mission that they forgot the needs of the body. [C. 24.] Wherever they met a demon they took his life with a single blow. They searched every nook and cranny of the hills and woods, and if they met a hermit, they all crowded round him. They grew very thirsty and terribly distressed, for they could find no water and had lost their way in the dense forest. Hanumān thought to himself that if they did not drink they were all like to perish. So he climbed to the top of a hill and looked all round, and in a cavern in the earth a strange sight met his gaze. Cakravāls, herons and swans were flying about it and a great number of birds were entering the cave. The Son of the Wind came down from the hill and brought all the monkeys and showed them the cavern. They put Hanumān in front to lead the way and entered the cave without delay.

[D. 24.] When they entered, they beheld a lovely garden and a lake covered with lotuses in blossom; and there, too, was a splendid temple where a female ascetic was sitting. [C. 25.] They all bowed to her from a distance and at her request explained what they were doing. Then she said, 'Drink, and eat every kind of delicious and beautiful fruit.' They all bathed and ate the sweet fruit and then gathered round her while she told them all about herself and said, 'I am going now to visit Raghurāi. Do you close your eyes and leave the cave; you will find Sītā; do not despair.' The warriors shut their eyes and when they opened them again, lo and behold, they were all standing on the shore of the sea. But

she meanwhile had gone to visit Raghuṇāth and bowed her head before his lotus feet, and many were the humble prayers she offered; and the Lord gave her the gift of steadfast faith. [D. 25.] Then in obedience to the Lord's command she went to the Badari forest, laying on her heart Rāma's two feet, which Brahmā and Śiva adore. [C. 26.] Now the monkeys were thinking to themselves that the appointed time had passed and they had met with no success. They were all saying to one another, 'Brother, what shall we do? We have no tidings to bring.' Said Aṅgad with his eyes full of tears, 'Either way we are doomed to death. Here we have found no news of Sītā, and if we go back the Monkey King will slay us. After my father was killed, he would have killed me too, had not Rāma protected me—no thanks to Sugrīva!' Again and again Aṅgad told them all that they were doomed to certain death. When they heard what Aṅgad said, the monkey warriors could make no answer; tears streamed from their eyes. For a moment they remained plunged in despair; then they all began to say, 'Wise prince, without news of Sītā we will not return.' So saying, all the monkeys went to the shore of the salt sea and there spread grass and sat down.

When he saw Aṅgad's distress, Jāmbavān gave him many instructive lessons: 'Dear friend, deem not Rāma to be a man; know him to be the Absolute, impersonal, invincible, unborn. How blest are all we, his servants, ever devoted to the Absolute made personal! [D. 26.] Of his own will has the Lord come down from heaven to save gods and earth and cows and Brāhmans, and those who worship him as personal, abandoning all thought of liberation, abide with him wherever he may be.'

[C. 27.] While he was thus in many ways instructing Aṅgad, Saṃpāti heard him from his mountain cave. He came out and saw a crowd of monkeys. 'God has given me a fine feast!' he cried. 'I'll eat them all up today! These many days past I've been dying for want of a meal. I've never had enough to fill my belly, but today God has made provision for me once and for all!' They were terrified when they heard what the vulture said. 'Truly,' they thought, 'we see that our time has come to die!' All the monkeys stood up when they saw the vulture; Jāmbavān, too, was much disquieted. But Aṅgad, after due deliberation, cried out, 'Thanks be to Jatāyu! There is none like him, who gave his life in Rāma's service, and, most blessed, has gone to Hari's heaven!' Hearing this cry of mingled grief and triumph, the bird drew near and the

monkeys were afraid. He reassured them and questioned them and they told him all that had happened. When Saṃpāti heard of his brother's exploit, he gave all glory to Raghupati. [D. 27.] 'Take me to the shore of the sea,' he said, 'that I may perform his funeral obsequies, and then I shall direct you and help you; you will find her whom you seek.'

[C. 28.] When he had performed the funeral rites for his younger brother on the seashore, he told his own story. 'Hear now, ye monkey warriors; we two brothers, when we were very young, flew up through the sky to approach the sun. My brother could not bear the heat and so turned back; but I in my pride drew near the sun. My wings were burnt by the excessive heat and I fell to the earth with a terrible cry. A sage named Candramā took pity on me when he saw me; many a wise lesson he taught me and freed me from my innate pride. "In the Tretāyuga," he said, "the Absolute will take human form; the Demon King will steal his wife; the Lord will send scouts to seek her, and when you meet them, you will be purified and your wings will grow again. Do not be anxious; show them where Sītā is." This day the sage's prophecy has come true. Listen to what I tell you and accomplish the mission of the Lord. On the top of Mount Trikūṭa lies the city of Lankā. There dwells Rāvan, at ease and unafraid; and there is a grove of *asoka* trees where Sītā sits and grieves unceasingly.

[D. 28.] I see her, but you cannot; there is no limit to a vulture's vision. I am old, else would I have given you some help.

[C. 29.] 'Anyone who can leap a thousand miles across the ocean and act with prudence will fulfil Rāma's mission. Just look at me and be of good heart; see what my body has become by Rāma's grace. You are the envoys of one by meditating on whose name even sinners can cross the infinitely boundless ocean of birth and death. So away with cowardice! Lay Rāma on your hearts and find some way to serve him!'

When the vulture had thus spoken and departed, Garur, the monkeys were all seized with consternation. Each one boasted of his strength but confessed to some doubt about crossing the ocean. 'I am now advanced in years,' said the king of the bears; 'I am not nearly as strong as I used to be. When Kharāri took the form of Trivikrama, I was a young bear and tremendously strong.'

[D. 29.] When he bound Bali, the Lord's body swelled to an inexpressible size; yet in less than an hour I ran right round it seven times.'

[C. 30.] 'I,' said Āngad, 'can leap to the other side, but I am rather doubtful about coming back again.' 'You are perfectly able to do it,' said Jāmbavān; 'but how can you be spared to go? You are in command of us all. Now listen, Hanumān,' continued the king of the bears; 'why do you remain silent, you who are so strong? You are the Son of the Wind and like the wind for strength; and in you is a store of understanding, sound judgement and great wisdom. What feat is there in the world, my friend, too difficult for you to perform? It was to serve Rāma's purpose that you became incarnate.'

Thereupon Hanumān became huge as a mountain, with a body of golden hue and splendid majesty like that of a second mountain king. Roaring like a lion again and again, he cried, 'I will leap across the salt ocean—it is child's play to me! And when I have slain Rāvan and all his allies, I will root up Mount Trikūta and carry it back here! But, Jāmbavān, I ask you, give me sound advice.'

'Just go, my friend,' he replied, 'and do nothing more than this—visit Sītā and bring back news of her. Then the Lotus-eyed by the might of his own arm, taking with him in mere sport his army of monkeys, [Ch. 2.] with, I say, his army of monkeys, will slay the demons and bring back Sītā; and the gods and Nārada and the other sages will sing his glorious praise that makes the three spheres holy.'

(Whoever hears or hymns, recites or meditates upon this glory attains to highest bliss, the glory sung by Tulasī Dās, who haunts the feet of Raghubīr as bees sip honey from the lotus.

[D. 30a.] All men and women who listen to the glorious acts of Raghunāth, who heals the sickness of mortality, will have their every wish fulfilled by Triśirā's foe. [S. 30b.] Hearken, then, to his perfections whose body is dark as the dark-blue lotus, more beautiful than a myriad Kāmadevas, and whose name is a fowler to snare the birds of sin.)

## THE BEAUTIFUL

[**Sloka.**] Him I adore, the tranquil, the eternal, beyond all proof, the sinless, who grants the peace of final liberation; whom Brahmā, Śambhu and the Serpent King continually reverence; made known by the Vedānta, all-pervading, Lord of the world, preceptor of the gods, Hari himself made man by illusion; chiefest of kings, in whom all mercy dwells, prince of the house of Raghu, whose name is Rāma !

O Raghupati, I declare in truth, and thou, too, knowest the secrets of all hearts, that in this heart of mine there is no other desire but that thou shouldest grant me perfect faith, O noblest of the Raghu house, and cleanse my mind of lust and every other sin !

To him I do obeisance, home of unequalled strength, with body like a golden mountain, a fire to consume the demon forest, chief among the wise, perfect in every excellence, lord of the monkeys, Raghupati's beloved worshipper, the Son of the Wind !

[**C. 1.**] Hanumān was delighted when he heard Jāmbavān's encouragement. 'Keep on looking for my return, brothers,' he said, 'living hardly and eating bulbs and roots and fruit till I see Sītā and come back. My task will be fulfilled—a task in which I take great delight.' So saying, he bowed to them all and gladly went forth with Raghunāth in his heart. On the margin of the sea stood a lofty hill and on to it he sprang as if in sport. With his thoughts fixed unceasingly on Raghubir the Son of the Wind leapt therefrom with a mighty bound. The hill whereon Hanumān had set foot sank down at once to the lower world. On sped Hanumān like Raghupati's shaft that misses not its mark; and Ocean, deeming him Raghupati's envoy, bade Maināka offer him rest.

[**D. 1.**] But Hanumān only touched him with his hand and then saluted him and said, 'Where can I rest before I have fulfilled my task in Rāma's service ?'

[**C. 2.**] When the gods saw the Son of the Wind going on his way, they sent the Mother of Serpents, whose name was Surasā, to test his mighty strength and wisdom. She came and said, 'Today the gods have given me a meal !' To this the Son of the Wind replied,

'When I have done Rāma's business and return and report tidings of Sītā to the Lord, then will I enter your mouth. I tell you the truth, mother; but let me go just now.' But in spite of all his efforts she would not let him go; so Hanumān said, 'Do not swallow me.' She stretched her mouth to a breadth of full three leagues, but the monkey made his body twice as broad. Fifty leagues wide she made her mouth, but the Son of the Wind at once became a hundred leagues in breadth; and as ever wider Surasā stretched her mouth the monkey displayed a body twice as broad. But when at last she made her mouth three hundred leagues in breadth, the Son of the Wind took minute form, crept into her mouth and then came out again, bowed his head and bade her farewell. 'I have proved to the full your wisdom and your strength,' said Surasā, 'and it was to this end that the gods sent me. [D. 2.] You will perform all Rāma's charge, you in whom dwell such might and wisdom.' Thus she blessed him and departed, and Hanumān went on his way rejoicing.

[C. 3.] There dwelt a female demon in the ocean who caught the birds of heaven by magic. Whatever living creatures flew through the sky, she watched their reflections in the water and seized their shadowy forms so that they could not fly away; thus always she devoured the flying creatures. She practised the same craft on Hanumān, but the monkey was at once aware of her trickery and slew her; and thus the valiant Son of the Wind with firm resolution reached the further shore of the sea. Arriving there, he gazed on the beauty of the woods. Bees were buzzing, greedy for honey; fine trees of every kind grew there, laden with fruit and flowers; and there were birds and beasts most pleasing to the eye. Spying a lofty hill before him, he ran and leapt upon it unafraid. But this, O Umā, was no special virtue in the monkey; it was the power of the Lord, who devours Death himself. Mounted on the hill, he beheld Lankā, a fortress magnificent beyond description, very high, with the ocean all around it; a stronghold with golden walls of dazzling radiance.

[Ch. 1.] Golden were its walls, set with varied gems, and in it many a splendid mansion, with squares and markets and well-planned streets and lanes—a city that lacked no charm. Elephants, horses and mules, pedestrians and chariots—who could number their multitude? Troops of demons of many forms were there, an army mighty beyond telling; woods and groves and parks and gardens, lakes and wells and ponds, all charming to behold;

daughters of men and serpents and gods and Gandharvas, whose beauty would bemuse a sage's soul. Here monstrous, mountainous wrestlers of mighty strength roared like thunder; in many an arena they closed and challenged one another with defiant cries. Myriads of warriors of fearsome stature were diligently guarding the city on all four sides; and here evil demons were feasting on buffaloes and men, cows and asses and goats.

(Tulasi Dās has described them thus in brief because they will assuredly find salvation when they abandon their bodies at the holy shrine of Raghubir's arrows.)

[D. 3.] Seeing that there was a great number of sentinels guarding the city, the monkey thought to himself that he had better assume a very tiny form and enter the city by night. [C. 4.] So the monkey took on a form as small as a mosquito and came to Laṅkā with his thoughts fixed on Narasimha. A female demon, by name Laṅkini, called out to him, 'Where are you going without asking my permission? You fool, don't you know what I am here for—to eat up all the thieves that come?' The mighty monkey struck her one blow with his fist and she lay rolling on the ground and vomiting blood. Then Laṅkini recovered and got up and with folded hands made anxious petition: 'When Brahmā was departing after granting Rāvan his boon, he spoke to me and gave me this sign: "When you are overthrown by a blow from a monkey, then know that destruction has come upon the demons." Friend, how great must be my merit that I have seen with my own eyes the envoy of Rāma! [D. 4.] My friend, if all the joys of heaven and liberation be placed in one pan of the scales, they will not outweigh the bliss derived from one moment's fellowship with the good. [C. 5.] Enter the city and do all you have to do, dwelling in your heart on the king of the city of Kosala.'

Poison, O Garuḍ, becomes nectar, enemies become friends, a puddle the ocean, fire is made cool and Mount Sumeru a grain of dust for him on whom Rāma sheds his glance of grace.

Then Hanumān assumed his very tiny form and entered the city with his thoughts fixed upon the Blessed Lord. He examined all the houses, one after another, and everywhere he saw innumerable warriors; at last he entered the palace of the Ten-headed, too marvellous to be described. The monkey saw him lying in bed, but nowhere in the palace was the princess of Videha to be seen. Next,

he beheld a magnificent mansion, and there, too, was a temple of Hari, standing apart. [D. 5.] Emblazoned with Rāma's weapons, the house was beautiful beyond description; the sight of fresh tulasi plants there delighted the monkey chief.

[C. 6.] 'Lankā is inhabited by none but demons; how comes the dwelling of a pious man here?' Thus had the monkey begun to reason to himself when at that moment Vibhiṣan awoke; he uttered the name 'Rāma, Rāma,' and the monkey was overjoyed to recognize a true disciple. 'I'll make myself known to him of my own accord,' he thought; 'for no harm can come to my mission from a good man.' Taking the form of a Brāhmaṇa, he accosted him, and Vibhiṣan arose and came to him when he heard his voice. Doing obeisance, he asked after his welfare and said, 'Tell me all about yourself, O Brāhmaṇa. Are you one of Hari's servants? For I feel an instinctive affection for you. Or are you Rāma himself, lover of the humble, come to make me greatly blessed?'

[D. 6.] Then Hanumān told him his name and all that Rāma had done, and while he listened they both trembled with emotion and lost themselves in the contemplation of Rāma's excellent virtues.

[C. 7.] 'Hearken, Son of the Wind,' said Vibhiṣan; 'I live here like a wretched tongue between the teeth. My friend, will the Lord of the Solar race ever have mercy on me as on one who lacks a lord? My body is a body of darkness and I know no righteous practice, nor is there in my heart devotion to his lotus feet; yet now, O Hanumān, I feel more confidence, for without Hari's favour there is no meeting with the good. It is only because Raghubir has shown me kindness that you of your own accord have made yourself known to me.'

'Hearken, Vibhiṣan,' said the monkey; 'it is the Lord's property ever to show affection to his servants. Tell me, do I come of so high a family, a mischievous monkey, the lowest of the low? Why, anyone who mentions our name first thing in the morning has to go hungry the rest of the day! So utterly vile am I! [D. 7.] But listen, my friend; even on me has Raghubir had mercy!' His eyes filled with tears as he thought on Rāma's virtues. [C. 8.] 'Most miserable must they be who purposely turn their backs on such a Lord, forgetful of his mercies!' Thus reciting the infinite perfections of Rāma, he experienced ineffable relief.

Then Vibhiṣan told him all that had happened and what sort of life Janak's daughter was living there, and Hanumān said, 'Hearken, brother; I would see my mother, Jānaki.' When Vibhiṣan had

explained how he might gain his end, the Son of the Wind bade him farewell and departed. Assuming once more his former tiny shape, he went to where Sītā abode in the *asoka* grove. When he saw her, he did mental obeisance. She had been sitting the whole night through with wasted frame and hair knotted up in a single braid upon her head, and was repeating to herself the tale of Raghupati's virtues. [D. 8.] With her eyes fixed upon her own feet she was mentally absorbed in the lotus feet of Rāma. The Son of the Wind grieved sore as he watched Jānaki sorrowing.

[C. 9.] He remained hidden among the leaves of a tree and thought, 'Now, brother, what am I to do?' Just at that moment Rāvan arrived, bedecked in fine attire, and with him were women. The scoundrel enticed Sītā with every kind of allurement—conciliation, bribery, threats and the sowing of doubts in her mind. 'Listen,' said Rāvan, 'O wise and fair of face! Mandodarī and all the other queens I will make your servants—I swear it—if you will look on me but once!' Hiding her face with a blade of grass, and thinking on her own most loving lord of Avadh, the princess of Videha replied, 'Listen to me, Ten-headed! Would a lotus ever bloom in a firefly's glow? Consider this well,' said Jānaki; 'wretch, have you no thought at all for Raghupati's arrows? Villain! You stole me away when I was alone. O vile and shameless, have you no shame?'

[D. 9.] Hearing himself compared to a firefly and Rāma to the sun, at the sound of these harsh words he drew his sword in a paroxysm of fury and cried, [C. 10.] 'Sītā, you have dishonoured me! Therefore with my dread sword will I cut off your head! Nay, obey my behest without delay, my fair one, or prepare to meet your death!'

'Fair as a garland of dark lotuses,' said Sītā, 'and strong as an elephant's trunk is the Lord's arm, Ten-headed! So hear me, you wretch! Either that arm shall fall upon my neck or else your cruel sword—I swear it solemnly! O sword, relieve me of my burning woe, born of the fire of separation from Raghupati! The blade you wield is cool and sharp and kind; relieve me of the burden of my grief!'

When Rāvan heard this, he again rushed forward to slay her; but Mandodarī counselled him chivalrously to refrain. He called together all the female demons and said, 'Do all you can to frighten Sītā. If she obey me not within one month, then will I draw my scimitar and slay her!' [D. 10.] Then the Ten-headed returned

to his palace, and in the grove the troop of female fiends began to frighten Sītā, assuming many hideous shapes.

[C. 11.] There was one female demon named Trijatā who was devoted to Rāma's feet and of very sound judgement. She called all the rest together and told them of a dream, saying, 'Look to your own interests by being kind to Sītā; for I saw in a dream that a monkey set fire to Laṅkā and slew the whole host of demons; and the Ten-headed was mounted on an ass, naked, with shaven crowns and all his twenty arms hewn off. In this fashion he rode off towards the south, while it seemed that Vibhiṣan sat upon the throne of Laṅkā. The whole city was crying to Raghubir for mercy, and the Lord sent to fetch Sītā. I tell you with absolute certainty that within a few days this dream will come true.' They were all afraid when they heard her words and fell at the feet of Janak's daughter.

[D. 11.] When they had all gone off in different directions, Sītā began to be sorrowful, thinking that the vile demon would slay her when the month was past. [G. 12.] With folded hands she spoke to Trijatā: 'Mother, you sympathize with me in my trouble. Speedily think of a way for me to abandon this body, for my bereavement, so hard to bear, can be borne no longer. Bring wood and build a pyre, and then, mother, set fire to it. So prove my constancy true, wise dame. Who could bear to listen to Rāvan's tormenting addresses?' When Trijatā heard her plea, she clasped her feet and tried to comfort her, reminding her of the majesty and might and great glory of the Lord. 'Believe me, fair princess,' she said, 'there is no fire to be had at night,' and departed to her own home.

'God himself has turned against me!' cried Sītā. 'No fire to be had and no end to my torture! The heavens above are brilliant with scintillating sparks, but not one single star comes down to earth! The moon is a ball of fire, but casts no fire down, as if it knew me for a luckless wretch! Hear my prayer, O *aśoka* tree; be true to your name<sup>1</sup> and relieve me of my pain! Thy fresh young shoots are red like fire. Give me that fire and let not my desolation move to its bitter climax!<sup>2</sup> One moment passed like an aeon to

<sup>1</sup> *aśoka*, no pain.

<sup>2</sup> *jani karahi nidāna*: thus the rather strained explanation of the *pīkā*: 'do not bring the bitter end (to my desolation by letting it survive and increase). Some read: *tamu karahu nidāna*, 'consume my body'.

the monkey as he watched Sītā thus piteously mourning the loss of her lord.

[S. 12.] The monkey pondered awhile and then threw down the ring, as though the *asoka* tree had dropped a spark. Joyfully she arose and picked it up. [C. 13.] She looked at the lovely ring, very beautifully engraved with Rāma's name. Astonished she beheld it, and when she recognized it, her heart was glad, yet anxious too. 'Who could conquer the unconquerable Raghurāī? Yet no magic could fashion such a ring.' Many such thoughts passed through Sītā's mind. Then Hanumān addressed her gently and began to tell of Rāmacandra's perfections. As soon as she heard him, Sītā's sorrow took flight; she began to listen with attentive ear and heart while Hanumān told his story from the beginning. She said, 'You who have told me a tale as refreshing as ambrosia to my ears, why do you not reveal yourself, my brother?' Then Hanumān drew near, and Sītā turned and sat down again dumb-founded. 'Rāma's messenger am I, Jānaki my mother,' he said; 'I swear it solemnly by the Lord of compassion. It was I who brought this ring, mother; Rāma sent it to you as a token.' 'Tell me,' she said, 'how can men consort with monkeys?' He told her how they had made alliance.

[D. 13.] When she heard the monkey's loving speech, she felt that she must trust him; for she realized that he was, in thought and word and deed, the servant of the ocean of mercy. [C. 14.] She recognized him to be Hari's votary and loved him very dearly. Her eyes filled with tears and she trembled with intense emotion. 'Hanumān, dear friend,' she said, 'you have come like a boat to save me as I sank in the sea of separation. Now tell me, I adjure you, of the welfare of Kharāri, home of bliss, and his younger brother. Tender-hearted is Raghurāī and merciful; why, monkey, is he so cruel? It is his nature to bring joy to his servants. Does Raghunāyak ever remember me? Friend, will my eyes ever be gladdened by the sight of my lord, delicate and dark of hue?' No more could she say and her eyes filled with tears. 'Alas, my lord has quite forgotten me!'

Seeing Sītā thus disquieted by the pain of separation, the monkey gently and courteously replied, 'Mother, the Lord is well, and his brother too; but he in whom all mercy dwells sorrows with your sorrow. Yield not to despair, mother; Rāma loves you twice as much as ever. [D. 14.] Now, mother, hear Raghupati's message

and take courage.' So saying, the monkey faltered in his speech and his eyes filled with tears.

[C. 15.] 'These were Rāma's words: "Your absence, Sītā, has turned my world upside down. The fresh buds on the trees are like fire; the night is like the night of death and the moon is like the sun. A lotus-bed looks like a forest of spears and the clouds seem to rain down burning oil. Those who were once my friends now hurt me, and the winds, cool, gentle and fragrant, are like a serpent's breath. My sorrow lessens a little in the telling; but to whom should I tell it? No one can understand it. The depth of my love and yours, beloved, is known to none but my own heart; and this my heart is ever with you; know herein the essence of my love!"'

When the princess of Videha heard the message of her lord, she lost all consciousness of self, absorbed in love. 'Take courage, mother,' said the monkey, 'and think on Rāma who comforts his servants. Lay on your heart the power of Raghupati; heed what I say and put away all fearfulness. [D. 15.] The troops of demons are as moths and Raghupati's shafts as fire. Take heart, then, mother, and know the demons to be consumed already. [C. 16.] Had Raghubir heard news of you, he would not have made delay. When Rāma's arrows, Jānakī, rise like the sun, where is the darkness of the demon host? This very moment, mother, would I take you hence, but—I swear it by Rāma—the Lord does not will it so. Have patience, mother, for a few days more and Raghubir will come with his monkeys. He will slay the demons and carry you away, and Nārada and the other sages will sing his glory throughout the three spheres.'

'My son,' she said, 'the monkeys are all like you, but the demons are warriors exceeding strong; and so I greatly doubt the issue.' Thereupon the monkey revealed his own proper shape, his body in form like a mountain of gold, terrible in war and of mighty valiance. Then Sītā took heart, and the Son of the Wind resumed his tiny form and said, [D. 16.] 'Hearken, mother; not very strong or wise are the creatures of the branches, but in the power of the Lord even a very tiny snake could swallow Garur.'

[C. 17.] When she heard the monkey's speech, imbued with faith and ardour and vigour and might, Sītā was comforted and gave him her blessing, for she knew him to be dear to Rāma: 'May you abound, dear friend, in strength and goodness; grow not old

nor die, my son; increase in virtue; may Raghunāyak be most gracious to you, and the Lord show you his favour !'

At this Hanumān's heart was flooded with intense devotion. Again and again the monkey bowed his head before her feet and spoke with folded hands: 'Now is my purpose accomplished, mother, for your blessing is effectual, as all men know. But hearken, mother; when I look at that delicious fruit growing on the trees, I find I am dreadfully hungry !'

'Beware, my son; there are fearful demons, mighty warriors, who guard the grove.'

'I fear them not, mother, if only you are pleased to give me leave.'

[D. 17.] Seeing that the monkey was a master of wit and strength, Jānakī said, 'Go then, dear friend; keep your thoughts fixed on Raghupati's feet and eat the luscious fruit.'

[C. 18.] He bowed to her and went and entered the garden. He ate the fruit and began to break down the trees. A great many warriors were posted there as watchmen; some he slew and others fled and cried aloud, 'O king, a huge monkey has arrived who has laid waste the *asoka* park; he has eaten the fruit and torn up the trees and has crushed the watchmen and hurled them to the ground'. When Rāvan heard it, he sent a company of warriors, and Hanumān roared aloud at the sight of them. The monkey overthrew all the demons, but some, half-dead, fled with loud cries. Then Rāvan sent his son, Prince Aksaya, who went forth with innumerable mighty fighting demons. When Hanumān saw him coming, he grasped a tree and threatened him, then overthrew him with a terrible roar. [D. 18.] Some he slew and some he crushed and some he seized and laid low in the dust; but still some escaped and cried, 'Lord, the monkey's might is irresistible !'

[C. 19.] When he heard that his son had been slain, the king of Laṅkā was infuriated. He sent out Meghanāda the stalwart, saying, 'Do not kill him, my son, but bind him; I must see this monkey and find out where he has come from'. Forth marched Indrajit, that peerless warrior; the news of his brother's death had roused him to a fury. When the monkey saw that a formidable warrior had arrived, he ground his teeth and roared and rushed out to meet him. He rooted up a very lofty tree and swept the king of Laṅkā's son from his chariot. As for the valiant demons who had come with him, the monkey seized them one by one and crushed them against his own body. When he had disposed of

them, he renewed his struggle with Meghanāda, and the two closed like two great elephants. He struck the demon with his fist and bounded up a tree; for a moment Meghanāda lay unconscious, then he got up again and practised a number of magic wiles, but the Son of the Wind could not be vanquished.

[D. 19.] Then the demon prepared to use the weapon that Brahmā had given him, and the monkey thought to himself, 'If I do not yield to Brahmā's shaft, his infinite majesty will suffer diminution'.

[C. 20.] Meghanāda shot the monkey with Brahmā's arrow, but even as he fell he slew a whole host of his foes. Seeing that the monkey had swooned, he tied him up with a noose and carried him off.

Hearken, Bhavānī; how could he be bound, the messenger of one whose name wise men repeat to sever the bonds of birth and death? The monkey let himself be bound to further the purpose of his Lord.

When they heard that the monkey had been bound, the demons all hastened to Rāvan's court to see the spectacle. The monkey was brought in and beheld ten-headed Rāvan's council-hall, of a dignity inexpressible. Gods and guardians of the quarters were there, waiting with folded hands upon his frown, all humble and afraid; but the monkey was no more awed at the sight of all this majesty than Garuḍ, undaunted in the midst of a multitude of snakes.

[D. 20.] When the Ten-headed saw the monkey, he laughed and jeered at him; but when he remembered the slaughter of his son, his heart grew sorrowful. [C. 21.] 'Who are you, monkey,' said the king of Laṅkā, 'and on whose might do you rely that you have laid waste and utterly destroyed my grove? Have you never heard of me? You wretched fool, I see that you are altogether without fear! What had the demons done that you should slay them? Tell me, you fool, as you value your life!'

'Hearken, Rāvan; he by whose might illusion fashions every universe; he, O Ten-headed, by whose power Brahmā creates, Hari preserves and Śiva destroys; he by whose strength the thousand-headed Śeṣa supports the universe with all its hills and forests on his head; he who takes various forms for the protection of the gods and teaches fools like you a lesson; he who broke the unyielding bow of Hara and thereby crushed the pride of all those princes; he who slew Khara, Dūṣapa, Triśirā and Bāli, all champions of unequalled valour; [D. 21.] he by virtue of the smallest fraction of whose might you yourself vanquished all created things—

he it is whose messenger I am; and he it is whose beloved bride you have stolen away.

[C. 22.] 'Oh yes, I've heard of your wonderful exploits—your fight with Sahasrabāhu and the glory you won in your battle with Bāli!' Rāvan heard what the monkey said but laughed it off. 'I ate the fruit, my lord, because I was hungry, and I broke down the trees because I am a monkey. Everybody loves his own life best, my master, so when your ne'er-do-wells attacked me, I gave them blow for blow. On the top of that your son tied me up, and I'm not at all ashamed of having been bound, for my one desire is to further my Lord's purpose. Now, Rāvan, I pray you with folded hands, have done with self-conceit and listen to my advice; have some regard for the stock of which you come; err no more, but worship him who relieves his worshippers of fear. Strive not with him before whom Death himself, devourer of gods and demons and all created things, trembles in sore dread! Surrender Jānakī, as I advise.

[D. 22.] 'Raghunāyak protects his suppliants; Kharāri is an ocean of compassion; the Lord will shelter you and forget your offences if you come to him for refuge. [C. 23.] Lay Rāma's lotus feet upon your heart and hold undisputed sway in Lankā. The glory of the seer Pulastya is like the stainless moon; be not a stain upon that moon. Without the name of Rāma no speech has any charm; bear this in mind and cease from pride and folly. A lovely woman decked with all adornments has no charm, O enemy of heaven, if she be unclothed. If a man be an enemy of Rāma, his wealth and lordship are as naught, though he possess them, and all he wins is as if he had not won it. Rivers that have no water at their source dry up as soon as the rain ceases to fall. Hearken, Ten-headed; I declare most earnestly that there is none to protect a man who opposes Rāma; not a thousand Śamkaras, Viṣṇus or Brahmās can save you if you injure Rāma. [D. 23.] Delusion is a root from which spring many woes; abandon the dark sin of arrogance and worship Rāma, chief of the house of Raghu, ocean of grace, the Blessed Lord!'

[C. 24.] Though the monkey had spoken in a very friendly way words full of faith and discretion, moderation and sound counsel, the demon laughed in his exceeding arrogance and cried, 'A wise *guru* have I found in a monkey! Wretch, your doom is at hand, who dare, base creature as you are, to offer me advice!' 'Nay,'

said Hanumān, 'it is you who are doomed; you are in error, as I know full well.'

When he heard the monkey's retort, he cried in ungovernable fury, 'Take this fool's life and lose no time about it!' At the word the demons ran to slay him, but Vibhiṣan came with the ministers and bowing his head before him, made very humble petition: 'Slay not an envoy, sire; it were contrary to diplomatic usage; give him some other punishment.' All said, 'Friend, your counsel is good'. When he heard it, the Ten-headed said with a laugh, 'Then break every bone in his body and send the monkey away! [D. 24.] A monkey prides himself upon his tail; I bid you all steep cloth in oil and bind it on his tail and then set fire to it. [C. 25.] When the tailless monkey goes off home, the fool will bring back his master; then let me see what power he has of whose greatness he has made such boast!'

When the monkey heard his threats, he smiled to himself and thought, 'I knew Sarasvati was helping me!'<sup>1</sup> At Rāvan's command the infuriated demons set about carrying out the scheme. Not a cloth nor a drop of *ghi* or oil was left in the city, so long had the monkey made his tail in sport. The people of the city came to see the sight. They kicked him and laughed at him with loud guffaws; they all beat drums and clapped their hands; they took him round the town and then set fire to his tail. When Hanumān saw the fire burning, he at once assumed a very tiny form, and then escaping from his bonds, leapt on to the upper storeys of gold. The demons' wives were terrified.

[D. 25.] At that moment the forty-nine winds, sent by Hari, began to blow. The monkey guffawed and roared and made himself so large that he touched the sky. [C. 26.] His body was enormous but very light. He sprang up and rushed from house to house. The city blazed and people were distraught as many myriads of fierce flames leapt up. 'Father! Mother!' the cry was heard. 'Who will save us now? Did we not say that this was no monkey but some god in monkey's form? Such is the penalty for scorning the good; our city is burning as though it had no lord!' He burnt down the city in the twinkling of an eye, save only Vibhiṣan's house. Hanumān was the envoy of him who created the fire, and that, Girijā, is why he was not burnt. Thus he consumed

<sup>1</sup> i.e. by putting this idea into Rāvan's mind.

the whole of Lankā from end to end and jumped into the middle of the sea.

[D. 26.] Having extinguished his tail and recovered from his fatigue, he again assumed his tiny form and went and stood before Janak's daughter with folded hands. [C. 27.] 'Give me, mother,' he said, 'some token of the sort that Raghunāyak gave me.' She took off the jewel in her hair and gave it him, and the Son of the Wind gladly accepted it. 'Give him my humble greetings, my son,' said Sītā, 'and this message: "Though you, my Lord, have no desire unfulfilled, you are famed for showing mercy to the sorrowful; then, Lord, remember this and deliver me from my grievous strait." Recall to him, my friend, the story of Indra's son<sup>1</sup> and remind my lord of the might of his arrows. If my lord come not within one month, he will not find me alive. Tell me, monkey, how can I go on living? You too, my son, say that you are just now departing, and it was the sight of you that brought me consolation; and now once again day and night will pass as before.'

[D. 27.] The monkey comforted Janak's daughter and did all he could to encourage her; then bowing his head at her lotus feet set out on his return to Rāma. [C. 28.] As he went, he roared aloud with so fearful a roar that the wives of the demons, when they heard it, brought forth before their time. He leapt across the ocean and reached the further shore and greeted the other monkeys with a cry of triumph. All the monkeys rejoiced when they saw Hanumān and felt they had gained a fresh lease of life; he looked so happy and his body was so radiant and vigorous that they guessed he had accomplished Rāmacandra's mission. All greeted him with as great delight as a floundering fish that returns to the water. Joyously they set out to see Raghunāyak, asking and telling all their news as they went. Then they all entered Madhuvana and with Āngad's consent ate sweet fruit; and when the watchmen would have stopped them, they beat them off with their fists and they all ran away and shouted, [D. 28.] 'The Crown Prince is laying waste the garden!'

When Sugrīva heard it, he was overjoyed, for he knew that the monkey must have accomplished the Lord's purpose and returned.

[C. 29.] 'If they had not heard tidings of Sītā, could they be eating fruit in Madhuvana?' Such thoughts were passing through the king's mind when the monkey arrived with all his host. They all

<sup>1</sup> Jayanta. See Ar.C. lff.

came and bowed their heads before his feet and the Monkey King affectionately embraced them all and asked after their welfare. 'Now that we have seen your feet,' they replied, 'our welfare is assured; by the grace of Rāma our task has been accomplished. Hanumān, sire, has succeeded in his endeavour and saved the lives of all the monkeys.' Hearing this, Sugrīva again embraced him and set out with the monkeys to join Raghupati. When Rāma saw the monkeys coming, their task accomplished, he was exceeding glad. The two brothers were seated on a crystal rock, and all the monkeys came and fell at their feet.

[D. 29.] Raghupati, the sum of all compassion, greeted them all affectionately and asked them how they fared. 'All is well with us, Lord,' they replied, 'now that we have seen your lotus feet.'

[C. 30.] 'Hearken, Raghurāya,' said Jāmbavān; 'he, Lord, to whom you show mercy is perpetually blessed with never-failing prosperity and gods and men and sages are gracious to him. He it is who is victorious, modest and virtuous, and his fair renown illuminates the three spheres. By the grace of our Lord our task has been fully accomplished and the purpose of our lives has this day been fulfilled. Lord, not a thousand tongues could tell the feat the Son of the Wind has performed.' Jāmbavān then proceeded to relate to Raghupati Hanumān's glorious exploits; and when he heard them, the gracious Lord was pleased beyond measure and once more gladly clasped Hanumān to his bosom. 'Tell me, my son,' he said, 'how Jānaki fares and how she preserves her life.'

[D. 30.] 'Your name,' said Hanumān, 'stands sentinel by day and night; her contemplation of your person is the gate; her feet are fettered by her eyes; by what road, then, can her life escape ?'

[C. 31.] When I was leaving her, she gave me this jewel from her hair.' Raghupati took it and pressed it to his heart. 'Lord,' continued Hanumān, 'Janak's daughter sent the following message with her eyes full of tears: "Clasp my lord's feet and his brother's and say, 'You are the friend of the humble and healer of your suppliants' pain; and I, in thought and word and deed, am constant in devotion to your feet; then for what sin, Lord, have you forsaken me? True, there is one offence in me which I acknowledge—now that I am separated from you my life has not taken flight; but, Lord, this is the fault of my eyes which have forcibly prevented my life from passing forth. Bereavement is a fire, my body cotton, and my sighs the wind; so would my body be consumed in a moment,

but for their own sake<sup>1</sup> my eyes shed such a flood of tears that it cannot be burnt away even by the fire of bereavement.' " O Lord of compassion, Sītā's misery is so profound it were better to keep silence. [D. 31.] O most merciful Lord, her every moment passes like an aeon. Haste, Lord, to set out, conquer the villainous host by the might of your arm and bring her back !

[C. 32.] When the Lord, abode of bliss, heard of Sītā's woes, his lotus eyes filled with tears. He said, 'Should he who comes to me for refuge in thought and word and deed know aught at all of misery ?' 'Lord,' said Hanumān, 'the only misery is to neglect the worship of your person. What reck you of these demons, Lord ? Vanquish the foe and bring back Jānakī !' 'Hearken, monkey,' said Rāma; 'no god or man or sage or any mortal creature has done me such a service as yourself. What service can I do you in return ? There is none that I can think of to equal yours. Believe me, my son, think as I may, I realize I cannot pay my debt.' Again and again the saviour of the gods gazed on the monkey with streaming eyes and body trembling with emotion.

[D. 32.] When Hanumān heard what his Lord said and looked upon his face and trembling limbs, he was overjoyed, and falling at his feet cried out in rapturous devotion, 'Save me, save me, O Blessed Lord !'

[C. 33.] Time after time the Lord would fain have raised him to his feet, but he would not be raised, so absorbed was he in love. (Siva himself was overcome with emotion when he recalled that scene—the Lord with his lotus hands upon the monkey's head. Then Śaṅkara composed himself and continued his most charming story.) The Lord raised the monkey and clasped him to his heart, and taking his hand seated him close beside himself and said, 'Tell me, monkey, how did you contrive to burn Laṅkā, so well guarded by Rāvan, and its impregnable stronghold ?'

Perceiving that the Lord was gracious, Hanumān replied without a trace of self-conceit: 'Monkeys are peculiarly clever at swinging from branch to branch. When I had leapt across the sea, I burnt the golden city, slew a number of the demons and laid waste their grove; and all this was done by your power, Raghurāi; the might I displayed, Lord, was in no sense my own. [D. 33.] Nothing, Lord, is impossible to him to whom you show your favour; by your power a piece of cotton could of a truth burn up the fire beneath

<sup>1</sup> i.e. hoping to see Rāma again.

the sea.<sup>1</sup> [C. 34.] Grant me, O Lord, of your grace that imperishable faith that brings with it the highest bliss.'

When the Lord heard the monkey's very simple prayer, Bhavāni, he replied, 'So be it!' He, Umā, who understands Rāma's nature is content with nothing but his worship, and he whose heart has been touched by this conversation has attained to faith in Raghu-pati's feet.

When they heard the Lord's words, the assembled monkeys cried, 'Glory, glory, glory to the Lord of grace, the source of happiness!' Then Raghu-pati summoned the Monkey King and said, 'Prepare now to start; why delay any longer? Issue your orders at once to the monkeys.' When they saw the spectacle, the gods rained down showers of blossoms from the sky and departed to their homes rejoicing.

[D. 34.] At once the Monkey King summoned them and they came, the hosts of captains, monkeys and bears in troops, of many colours and unequalled might. [C. 35.] They bowed their heads before the Lord's lotus feet; loud roared the powerful bears and monkeys. Rāma beheld the whole monkey host and graciously inspected them with his lotus eyes. Receiving the gift of the might of Rāma's grace, the monkey captains became like winged mountains. Joyously Rāma set out on the march, and many were the fair auspicious omens that met him. Fitting were such omens at his setting forth whose glory was the fullness of good fortune. The princess of Videha knew that the Lord had begun the march, for the throbbing of her left side told her. All Jānaki's good omens were ill omens for Rāvan. The army marched out, and who could describe it? Loud roared the countless monkeys and bears. On they marched, through the air or on the ground, just as they wished, wielding mountains and trees and with claws for weapons. Bears and monkeys roared like lions; the elephants of the quarters reeled and trumpeted.

[Ch. 2.] The elephants of the quarters trumpeted, earth was moved, the mountains shook and the seas were in turmoil. Glad were all the Gandharvas, gods, sages, serpents and Kinnaras that their troubles were at an end. Millions and millions of monkeys, formidable warriors all, rushed on snapping and chattering, mag-

<sup>1</sup> *baravāna*: the submarine fire said in the *Kālikā Purāṇa* to have been the fire sent forth by Śiva to destroy Kāmadeva, placed beneath the sea in the form of a mare by Brahmā; but Vālmiki states that it is the flame of the seer Aurva's wrath which will burn up the world at the end of a *kalpa*.

nifying Rāma's mighty power and chanting all the virtues of the Lord of Kosala. The huge Serpent King could not support the burden; again and again he was like to swoon; but again and again he clutched with his teeth the hard back of the tortoise. How beautiful were the marks they made, as though the Serpent King understood how glorious was the theme of Raghubir's splendid march and were writing the story on the shell of the tortoise, a holy script that would endure for ever !

[D. 35.] In this manner the gracious Lord marched on and halted on the shore of the sea, and all around the hosts of bear and monkey warriors began to devour fruit.

[C. 36.] Meanwhile, the demons had been in a state of great anxiety ever since the monkey had burnt Laṅkā and departed. Each in his own home was thinking that there was no hope of salvation for the demon race. If Rāma's envoy, they thought, is of such indescribable might, how can we escape if he enters our city himself ? When Mandodari heard from her spies what the citizens were saying, she was greatly disquieted; with folded hands she approached her lord alone, and touching his feet spoke words full of sound sense: 'Cease, husband, to strive against Hari; take my advice to heart, it is for your good. Lord, if you value your security, summon your minister and send back the wife of him whose envoy performed such feats of valour that the demons' wives give birth before their time when they recall them. Sītā has come like a cold winter night to shrivel up the lotus-bed of your race. Hearken, husband; unless you surrender Sītā, there is no hope for you, though Śambhu and Brahmā should help you.'

[D. 36.] Rāma's arrows are like a host of serpents and the demon throng as frogs; forgo your obstinate intent and take wise steps or ever they swallow us up.'

[C. 37.] The senseless fool, whose arrogance the whole world knew, laughed when he heard her advice: 'Of a truth,' he said, 'women are timorous by nature, afraid when things go well, weak-minded too ! If the army of monkeys does come, our poor demons will eat them up and live ! It is quite ridiculous that my wife should be afraid when the very guardians of the spheres fear me and tremble.' So saying, he laughed aloud and clasped her to his bosom and proceeded to the council-hall, bursting with conceit.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *mamatā adhikāt*; or, as the *r̥īkā* explains, 'with a great display of affection'.

But Mandodari was anxious at heart, thinking that God was hostile to her husband.

When he took his seat in the council-hall, tidings were brought to him that the whole army had crossed the ocean. He asked his ministers to give him sound advice, and they all laughed and said, 'Rest easy; you have conquered gods and demons without the least trouble; of what account are men and monkeys?' [D. 37.] If a minister or a doctor or a *guru*, these three, speak fair words for fear or hope of reward, then that spells speedy ruin for the kingdom or for health or for religion. [C. 38.] That was the sort of help that Rāvan got; they merely broke out into repeated praises of him.

Then Vibhisan seized the opportunity to come to him and bowed his head before his brother's feet. Bowing again, he sat upon his throne and with his brother's leave addressed him thus: 'If you ask my counsel, gracious lord, then, brother, I will declare, as far as I am able, what is for your good. Whoever desires his own welfare and to enjoy good repute, good understanding, a good manner of life or any other happiness, he, my lord, should shun to look on the face of another's wife as men shun to look on the moon on its fourth night.<sup>1</sup> Though a man were sole ruler of the fourteen worlds, he could not fight with all creation and stand firm. However perfect and accomplished a man may be, if he display the slightest trace of avarice, none will speak well of him. [D. 38.] Lust, anger, pride and greed, my lord, are all roads that lead to hell. Give them all up and worship Raghubīr, whom the saints worship.'

[C. 39.] 'Rāma, brother, is not merely a king of mortal men; he is sovereign of the universe, death of Death himself, the Absolute, the perfect, the unborn, the Blessed Lord, all-pervading, invincible, without origin or end; the friend of earth and Brāhmans and cows and gods, the ocean of grace in human form, come to bless the faithful and break the power of all the hosts of evil; guardian of the Veda and of righteousness; mark this well, my brother! Cease to contend with him; bow your head before him, for Raghu-nāth relieves his suppliants of all their woes. Give back the princess of Videha to the Lord, O king, and worship Rāma, who loves the

<sup>1</sup> Hindus believe that one who looks at the moon on the fourth night of its waxing in the month of Bhādron will be falsely accused of some crime.

undeserving. The Lord forsakes not even one who is guilty of harming the universe, if only he will come to him for refuge. That Lord whose name is a cure for every ill is manifest—believe it, Rāvan! [D. 39a.] Again and again I touch your feet and beseech you, O Ten-headed, have done with pride, delusion and conceit and worship the King of Kosala! [39b.] The sage Pulastya has sent this message by his own disciple, and this, my brother, I have taken immediate occasion to repeat to my lord.'

[C. 40.] Now there was a very prudent minister, Mālyavān. He was delighted when he heard Vibhiṣan's counsel and said, 'Sire, your brother Vibhiṣan is a man of the soundest judgement; take his advice to heart.' 'These two fools are praising my enemy,' said Rāvan; 'will no one rid me of them?' So Mālyavān returned home, but Vibhiṣan once more spoke with folded hands: 'In the heart of every man, O king, is found wise or unwise judgement—so the Purāṇas and the Vedas declare; where there is wise judgement there is perfect happiness, but where there is unwise judgement there at the last is misery. In your heart is lodged unwise judgement to your undoing, so that you reckon your friends your enemies and your enemies your friends, and lavish your affection on that Sītā who is the night of death for all the demon race. [D. 40.] Brother, I clasp your feet and entreat you, pay heed to me as a child you love, and return Sītā to Rāma lest ill befall you.'

[C. 41.] Thus did Vibhiṣan offer sound advice in accord with the principles of wise men, the Purāṇas and the Vedas; but when he heard it, the Ten-headed arose in a rage and cried, 'Villain, death is at your door! You only live, you wretch, because I continually support you, and yet, you idiot, you prefer to take my enemy's part! Tell me, you scoundrel, who is there in the whole world whom I have not vanquished by the might of my arm? You live in my city, but your heart is with the ascetics. You had better go to them, you fool, and preach your moral sermons!' So saying, he gave him a kick, but his brother clasped his feet repeatedly. Umā, herein lies the greatness of a saint that he does good to one who does him ill. 'You have done well to strike me,' he said, 'for you are as my father; but still, O king, it were well for you that you should worship Rāma.' Then with his ministers he went his way through the air, crying aloud to all, [D. 41.] 'Rāma is true to his purpose, the mighty Lord, and your court is doomed to death! Now I go to seek refuge with Raghubir; let no one blame me!'

[C. 42.] When Vibhiṣan had said this and departed, the doom of all was assured. To scorn the good, Bhavāṇi, works speedy ruin of all that prospers. No sooner had Rāvan spurned Vibhiṣan than his glory and good fortune deserted him. Vibhiṣan went rejoicing on his way to Raghunāyak with many an eager longing in his heart. ‘I shall behold his lotus feet, rosy and soft, delighting those who reverence them—the feet by whose touch the seer’s wife was saved, the feet that purified the forest of Dandaka, the feet that Janak’s daughter laid upon her heart, the feet that chased the feigned deer over the ground, the feet that are the lotuses on the lake of Hara’s heart! Ah, greatly blest am I that I shall see them! [D. 42.] Those feet on whose sandals Bharat fixed his thoughts I shall behold with my own eyes this very day!’

[C. 43.] Such were the loving fancies in his mind as he swiftly reached the further shore of the sea. When the monkeys saw Vibhiṣan coming, they thought he was some special envoy from the enemy; so they put him under guard and came to the Monkey King and told him of his arrival. ‘Hearken, Raghurāi,’ said Sugrīva; ‘Rāvan’s brother has come to see you.’ ‘What do you advise?’ said the Lord. ‘Believe me, sire,’ replied the king of the monkeys, ‘demon trickery is past all understanding. Why has he come here, this fellow who can change his shape at will? The fool has come to spy out the land; I propose he be bound and kept under guard.’ ‘That’s a very good idea of yours, my friend,’ said Rāma; ‘but I have vowed to reassure those who come to me for refuge.’ The Lord’s reply delighted Hanumān, who thought, ‘How tenderly the Blessed Lord loves his suppliants!’

[D. 43.] Then said Rāma again, ‘Those who spurn a suppliant because they think he may do them an injury are vile and sinful; it is a crime even to look at them. [C. 44.] I would not turn away from one who was guilty of the murder of ten million Brāhmans if he came to me for shelter. As soon as any creature enters my presence, the sins of ten million lives are blotted out. One who is truly a sinner abhors the worship of my person; then if this demon is evil at heart, why has he come to face me? Only a man of pure heart can find me; deceit and hypocrisy I detest. Even if the Ten-headed has sent him to spy out our secrets, we have no reason to fear, Monkey King, and nothing to lose. Why, my friend, Laksman could slay all the demons in the world in the twinkling of an eye! If he is frightened and has come to me for refuge, I shall protect him as I would my own life. [D. 44.] Either

way, bring him here,' said the Lord of grace with a smile. 'Glory to the Merciful!' cried the monkey, and off he went with Aṅgad and Hanumān.

[C. 45.] The monkeys respectfully placed Vibhiṣan before them and entered the presence of Raghupati, mine of compassion. From afar off he beheld the two brothers, a sight to bring the gift of joy to the beholder. Then as he looked on Rāma's perfect beauty, he stood quite still with open eyes intently fixed on the long arms and dawn-bright lotus eyes and dark-hued body of him who banishes his suppliants' fears, his lion-like shoulders and broad strong chest and face to fascinate innumerable Loves. His eyes filled with tears and he trembled all over with emotion; then composing himself, he spoke in gentle tones: 'Lord, I am Rāvan's brother, a demon by birth, O saviour of the gods, by nature addicted to sin, with a body of darkness and loving the dark like an owl. [D. 45.] I have heard of your glory, O Lord, and that you banish the dread of rebirth, and so have come. Save me, save me, O Raghubir, dispeller of woe and consoler of the suppliant!'

[C. 46.] So saying, he was prostrating himself, but when the Lord saw it, he at once arose in great delight and, charmed to hear his humble words, took him in his long arms and clasped him to his heart. Both he and his brother embraced him; then seating him by his side, he spoke a word to calm his votary's fears: 'Tell me, prince of Laṅkā, how fare you and your family? You dwell in an evil place. Living as you do day and night surrounded by villains, how, my friend, is your integrity preserved? I know all about your way of life, your excellence in virtue and your abhorrence of vice. God preserve us from the company of wicked men! It were better, my son, to live in hell!'

'Now that I have seen your feet, Raghurāya, all is well with me, for you have had mercy on me as your true servant. [D. 46.] No creature can be happy or dream of inward peace till he abandon lust that brings naught but woe and worship Rāma. [C. 47.] In a man's heart dwells every kind of vice—greed, delusion, envy, pride and self-conceit—till Raghunāth abides in his breast, bearing his bow and arrows and with his quiver at his side. Selfishness, the darkest of dark nights, so grateful to the owls of inordinate affection and hate, dwells in the soul until the radiant power of the Lord rises therein like the sun. Now, Rāma, all is well with me. The fears that burdened me are at an end, for I have seen your otus feet. He is not touched by the threefold pains of mortal life

on whom you, O Lord of grace, have shed your favour. I am but a demon, the lowest of the low, nor have I ever practised virtue, yet he whose form the saints can never comprehend by contemplation, that Lord has been pleased to take me to his heart ! [D. 47.] How blest am I, how infinitely blest, O Rāma, sum of all grace and bliss, that I have looked with my own eyes upon those lotus feet that are adored by Brahmā and Śiva !'

[C. 48.] 'Hearken, my friend, while I declare to you my nature, well known to Bhuśundi, Śambhu and Girijā. Even though a man should be the enemy of all creation, if he comes to me in awe and looks to me for refuge, abandoning all pride, delusion, guile and hypocrisy, then right speedily I make him like a saint. He who gathers up all objects of natural affection—mother, father, brother, son and wife, wealth, home, friends and family—like strands, and makes of them one strong rope to bind his soul to my feet; he who looks on all with an impartial eye and has abandoned all desire, and in whose heart is neither joy nor sorrow nor fear, such a saint abides in my heart like riches in the heart of an avaricious man. Saints like yourself are dear to me; it is only for their sake I am constrained to take on mortal form. [D. 48.] Those who worship the personal and devote themselves to the good of others, and persevere in the ways of virtue and religious duty, and love the feet of Brāhmans, are dear to me as my own life. [C. 49.] Hearken, prince of Lankā; all these virtues are found in you, and that is why I love you very dearly.'

When the monkey host heard Rāma's words, they all shouted, 'Glory to him in whom all mercy dwells !' Vibhīṣan could have listened for ever to the Lord's words, welcome as ambrosia to his ears; again and again he clasped his lotus feet with a boundless devotion his heart could scarce contain. 'Hearken, divine Lord,' he said, 'ruler of all created things moving and unmoved, protector of the suppliant, who knowest the secrets of all hearts, formerly my heart found room for sensual desire, but now it has been washed away in the stream of my devotion to the feet of my Lord. Now, gracious Lord, grant me that purifying faith in thine own person which ever delights the soul of Śiva.'

'So be it,' said the valiant Lord and forthwith ordered sea water to be brought. 'Although, my friend, you do not desire reward, yet the vision of myself is effectual throughout the world.' With these words Rāma marked his forehead with the mark of royalty and flowers rained down in abundance from the sky.

[D. 49a.] Thus did he rescue Vibhiṣan, who was being consumed in the fire of Rāvan's wrath, fanned to fury by the wind of his breath, and bestow on him secure dominion; [49b.] and all that wealth that Śiva had given to Rāvan for the sacrifice of his ten heads Raghunāth gave to Vibhiṣan as though it were naught. [C. 50.] Those who desert such a Lord to worship another are like beasts that have no tails or horns. He accepted Vibhiṣan as his votary and made him his own, and all the monkeys were delighted with the Lord's loving-kindness.

Then spoke the omniscient who dwells in the hearts of all, he who takes all forms, separate and passionless, preserver of virtue, made man for the purpose of destroying the demon race: 'Hearken, valiant Monkey King and king of Lankā; how is this deep ocean to be crossed? It is full of crocodiles, sea-serpents and fish, of great depth and altogether hard to pass over.'

'Hearken, Raghunāyak,' said the king of Lankā; 'though your arrow could dry up a myriad seas, yet it were but courtesy to go and make request of Ocean. [D. 50.] Ocean, my Lord, is an elder in your family;<sup>1</sup> he will think out and suggest a plan, and the whole host of bears and monkeys will cross the sea without an effort.'

[C. 51.] 'Friend,' said Rāma, 'that is a very good suggestion; so let it be if fortune be our helper.' But Lakṣman was not pleased with this advice and was very sorry to hear Rāma's reply, 'Lord,' he said, 'why trust fortune? Be indignant! Dry up the ocean! This "fortune" is a coward's one resource; it is the lazy who cry "fortune! fortune!"' Raghubīr laughed when he heard him and said, 'None the less we'll do it; have a little patience'. So saying, the Lord Raghurāi rebuked his brother and went to the edge of the sea; and there after first bowing his head and doing obeisance, he strewed grass on the shore and took his seat.

As soon as Vibhiṣan had gone to seek the Lord, Rāvan sent spies to follow him. [D. 51.] They disguised themselves as monkeys and watched all that was happening and inwardly applauded the Lord's perfections and the love he showed his suppliant. [C. 52.] But when they began to extol Rāma's generosity and were so moved with emotion that they forgot to disguise themselves, the monkeys recognized them as enemy spies and bound them all and brought

<sup>1</sup> King Sagara, whose sons dug the bed of ocean (*śdgara*), was one of Rama's ancestors.

them to the Monkey King. 'Hearken, all you monkeys,' said Sugrīva; 'break every bone in the demons' bodies and send them home!' At Sugrīva's bidding the monkeys ran and tied up the whole lot and marched them all round the camp. The monkeys began to beat them black and blue and would not let them go though they cried for mercy. At last they cried, 'We adjure you by the king of Kosala not to deprive us of our ears and noses!' Laksman heard their cry and summoned them all to himself and, taking pity on them, smiled and had them released. 'Give Rāvan this letter,' he said, 'and tell that ruin of his race to read what Laksman says; [D. 52.] and tell the fool by word of mouth my generous message: "Return Sītā and make your peace with Rāma; else are you doomed to death!"'

[C. 53.] The spies bowed their heads before Laksman's feet and at once departed, lauding his perfections. They came to Laṅkā, singing Rāma's praises as they went, and bowed their heads at Rāvan's feet. The Ten-headed with a laugh asked for their report: 'Come now, Śuka, tell me how you fared, and then give me news of Vibhīṣan to whom death has drawn very nigh. The fool left Laṅkā, where he was a prince, and now the luckless fellow will be like the weevil in the barley.<sup>1</sup> Next, tell me about the army of bears and monkeys that cruel fate has inspired to march on Laṅkā, and whose lives poor, soft-hearted Ocean has preserved. Then tell me all about the ascetics who quake within them for dread of me. [D. 53.] Did you meet them or did they turn back when they heard tell of my great renown? Come, tell me about the enemy's splendour and strength. You seem utterly dumbfounded!'

[C. 54.] 'Lord,' said Śuka, 'even as you have put your questions with such kindness, so be not wroth but accept my report as true. When your brother met Rāma, immediately on his arrival he marked his brow with the mark of royalty. When they heard that we were Rāvan's spies, the monkeys bound us and ill-treated us in various ways, and they were beginning to cut off our ears and noses when we called on the name of Rāma and they let us go. You asked, O king, about Rāma's forces; a thousand million tongues could not describe them. He has an army of bears and monkeys of various hues with ferocious faces, huge and formidable. The might of that monkey who burnt the city and slew your son is as nothing

<sup>1</sup> i.e., he will be crushed, together with Rāma's army, as the weevil is crushed with the barley.

compared to that of the rest. Warriors there are of countless names, fierce and irresistible, as strong as innumerable elephants and of enormous size; [D. 54.] Dvivida, Mayanda, Nila, Nala, Āngad, Gada, Vikatāsya, Dudhimukha, Kehari, Niśatha, Śatha, and Jāmbavān, all-powerful warriors.

[C. 55.] 'All these monkeys are as valiant as Sugrīva, and who could number the myriads like them? By the grace of Rāma their strength is unparalleled; they regard the three spheres as a blade of grass. I have heard say, O Ten-headed, that the monkey captains number eighteen thousand billions, and there is not a single monkey in their army, O king, who could not conquer you in battle. They are all most furious and itching to attack, but Raghuṇāth withholds the order. "We'll dry up the ocean with all its fish and serpents, or else we'll fill it full of huge mountains and crush the Ten-headed and lay him low in the dust!" That is the kind of language the monkeys are using. Fearless by nature, they are roaring and threatening as if they would swallow up Laṅkā entire! [D. 55.] 'Born warriors are all the monkeys and bears, and the Lord Rāma is their commander. O Rāvan, they could vanquish ten million Deaths upon the field! [C. 56.] Not a hundred thousand Śeṣas could describe the greatness of Rāma's majesty and might and wisdom. He could dry up a hundred oceans with a single arrow, but with the utmost courtesy he has asked your brother his advice, and in accord with his suggestion and the compassion that dwells in his heart he is asking Ocean to afford him passage.'

At this the Ten-headed laughed and said, 'If that's all the sense he's got, no wonder he's made allies of monkeys! He has acted on that born coward's proposal and gone whining to Ocean like a spoilt child! You fool, why give a false report of his greatness? I have plumbed the depths of my enemy's strength and understanding! Where in the world could one win victory or hold sway who has that coward Vibhiṣan for a counsellor?'

The scoundrel's boasts infuriated the spy and he thought it the right moment to produce the letter. 'Rāma's younger brother,' he said, 'gave me this letter; have it read, O king, and take comfort from it.' Rāvan guffawed as he took it with his left hand; the fool summoned his minister and had it read.

[D. 56a.] 'Fool, flatter not your soul with boasts and bring not utter ruin on your race. If you contend with Rāma, you will not escape disaster though you should seek refuge with Viṣṇu, Brahmā

or Śiva. [56b.] Either abandon your pride and like your brother seek as a bee the lotus feet of the Lord, or, villain, be consumed with all your house like a moth in the fire of Rāma's shafts!'

[C. 57.] When he heard this message, the Ten-headed was inwardly terrified, but with a smile on his face he proclaimed aloud to all, 'This little ascetic is boasting and bragging like one who has fallen to the ground and would clutch the sky!' Said Śuka, 'Abandon, O king, your innate arrogance and believe that all he writes is true. Take my advice, lord, and cease from wrath; quarrel no more with Rāma. Raghubīr is very tender-hearted though he is sovereign of all the spheres, and as soon as you make your peace with him the Lord will be gracious to you and will no more remember even one of your offences. Surrender Janak's daughter to Raghunāth; do just this one thing, I ask of you, my lord.'

When he suggested the surrender of the princess of Videha, the scoundrel gave him a kick. He bowed his head before his feet and departed to seek Raghunāyak, the ocean of grace. He did obeisance and told him his story and by Rāma's favour regained his former estate; for he was in reality a learned sage, Bhavānī, and had been turned into a demon by the curse of the seer Agastya. Again and again the sage did homage to Rāma's feet and then betook himself to his own hermitage.

[D. 57.] Brutish Ocean heeded not Rāma's request. Three days passed, and Rāma grew angry and said, 'He will show me no courtesy unless I threaten him. [C. 58.] Laksman, bring me my bow and arrows that I may dry up the ocean with a shaft of fire. To make petition of a fool, to treat a scoundrel with affection, to give sound counsel to an inveterate miser, to speak of wisdom to one absorbed in thought of self, to advise continence to a very avaricious man or moderation to a man of wrath, or to tell of Hari to a lecher, is to sow seed in barren ground.' So saying, Raghupati strung his bow and Laksman was pleased at his intent. The Lord aimed the dread arrow and Ocean's breast was ablaze. Crocodiles, serpents and fish were dismayed.

When Ocean saw that the creatures were burning, he filled a golden dish with various gems and swallowing his pride approached in Brāhmaṇ form. [D. 58.] Believe me, Garuḍ; only by pruning will a plantain bear fruit, though endless effort be spent on the watering; even so a mean man heeds not a prayer; only by threats will he learn humility.

[C. 59.] Affrighted, Ocean clasped the Lord's feet: 'Pardon, O Lord, all my sins! The air, the wind, fire, water, earth—all these act brutishly by nature, Lord. Delusive power sent forth by you has brought all these to birth as causes of creation—so all the holy books declare. Each finds its happiness in resting in the state appointed by the Lord. The Lord has done well to teach me this lesson; but still my bounds were set by you. A drum, a village boor, a Śūdra, a beast and a woman, all these are fit for beating. By the Lord's power I shall be dried up, the army will pass over, and my greatness will be no more. The scriptures declare the Lord's decree to be immutable; straightway will I do what seemeth to you best.'

[D. 59.] Hearing this very humble speech, the gracious Lord smiled and said, 'Tell me, then, some plan, my friend, whereby the monkey host may cross the strait.'

[C. 60.] 'Lord, there are two monkey brothers, Nila and Nala, whom a seer blessed when they were boys. At their touch huge mountains will, by your favour, swim upon the ocean. I too will lay the power of the Lord upon my heart and help with all my might. Thus, Lord, bridge the ocean that your glory may be sung in the three spheres. Slay, Lord, with this arrow those who dwell upon my northern shore, iniquitous villains.'<sup>1</sup> When he heard of Ocean's troubles, the valiant Rāma graciously removed them. Beholding Rāma's mighty strength and prowess, Ocean rejoiced and was at peace; and after explaining all the facts to the Lord, did homage to his feet and departed.

[Ch. 3.] Ocean returned to his own home and the Lord Raghupati approved his suggestion.

(These acts that cleanse the Kaliyuga of all impurity has Tulasi Dās sung as best he can. O foolish soul, forsake all other hope and confidence and sing or listen to the sum of Raghupati's virtues wherein all bliss abides, whereby all doubts are banished and all sorrows overcome. [D. 60.] Those who listen with reverence to the song of Raghunāyak's virtues, the song that brings with it all blessing, pass with no boat across the sea of birth and death.)

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Ābhira.

## LĀNKĀ

[**Śloka.**] I do homage to Rāma, whom Kāmadeva's foe adores, who banishes the dread of rebirth, a lion to slay the wild elephant Death; lord of ascetics, whom mystic wisdom alone can comprehend; the sum of all perfections, invincible, impersonal, immutable, beyond illusion; Lord of heaven, devoted to the slaughter of the wicked, the only guardian deity of all the Brāhmaṇ race, with the dark beauty of a cloud, lotus-eyed, God in the form of an earthly king !

I reverence Śāṅkara, whose body is most beautiful with the lustre of the conch and the moon; clad in the skin of a tiger and bedecked with terrible black snakes; lover of Gaṅgā and the moon; lord of Kāśī, who cleanses the Kaliyuga of all its defilement and, like the tree of Paradise, gives good gifts; the lord of Girijā, ever to be praised; the sum of all perfections; conqueror of Kāmadeva. May Sambhu, who bestows upon the good that liberation which is so hard to win and punishes the wicked, may that same Śāṅkara grant me abundant blessing !

[**Dohā.**] O soul, why dost thou not worship Rāma whose keen arrows are instants, moments, minutes, years, ages and aeons, and whose bow is Death ?

[**Sorathā.**] When the Lord Rāma heard Ocean's suggestion, he summoned his ministers and thus he spoke; 'Now why delay ? Build the bridge that the army may pass over.' Jāmbavān said with folded hands, 'Hearken, Banner of the Solar race; Lord, your name is a bridge on which men mount and cross the ocean of mortality. [C. 1.] Should it then take long to cross this little sea ?'

Thereupon the Son of the Wind said, 'The power of the Lord, like the fierce fire beneath the sea, had already dried up the waters of the ocean; but then the water that fell in streams from the eyes of your enemies' weeping wives filled it up again and that is why it is salt.'

When they heard the Son of the Wind's quaint conceit, the monkeys were delighted and looked towards Raghupati. Jām-

bavān sent for the two brothers, Nala and Nila, and told them all that had been said. 'Dwell in your hearts,' he said, 'on Rāma's power and so build the bridge; 'twere no great effort.' Next, he summoned the band of monkeys and said, 'Hear ye all this prayer of mine; lay on your hearts the lotus feet of Rāma and, bears and monkeys, together fall to this sportive toil. Run, you hosts of monstrous monkeys, and bring trees and hills in multitudes.' At the word monkeys and bears went off shouting 'Hurrah! Glory to the mighty power of Raghubir!'

[D. 1.] They rooted up the tallest trees and hills as though in play and brought them and gave them to Nala and Nila, who set to work to build the bridge. [C. 2.] Huge mountains the monkeys brought and gave them, and Nala and Nila handled them like balls. When he saw the bridge so beautifully constructed, the gracious Lord smiled and said, 'Very charming and pleasant is this spot, immeasurably and inexpressibly glorious; here will I establish the worship of Śambhu; this is my fixed intent.' Thereupon the Monkey King sent out a number of messengers and summoned and brought together all the great sages, who set up an emblem of Śiva and worshipped it with due ceremony. 'None is so dear to me as Śiva,' said the Lord; 'the man who is opposed to Śiva and is called my worshipper can never dream of winning to me; the enemy of Śaṅkara who aims at faith in me is fit for hell, a fool of little understanding. [D. 2.] Those who love Śaṅkara and are my foes, and Śiva's foes who would fain be my servants, shall dwell for a full aeon in the fires of hell! .

[C. 3.] 'Those who make pilgrimage to Rāmeśvara shall enter my realm when they leave the body, and he who brings the water of Gaṅgā to offer in this place shall win that liberation which is union with myself. To him who with guileless heart and no desire reverences this spot Śaṅkara will give the gift of faith in me; and he who visits the bridge that I have built shall without effort pass across the sea of birth and death.' All were delighted with Rāma's words, and the great sages returned each to his own hermitage. Girijā, it is the property of Raghupati ever to show affection to his suppliants.

Nila and Nala, skilled craftsmen, built the bridge and by Rāma's favour their fame spread far and wide. The stones which themselves sink and cause other things to sink floated like boats; nor is this to be ascribed to the power of Ocean or the property of the stones or the action of the monkeys; [D. 3.] it was by the power

of the Lord Raghubir that the rocks floated across the sea. What senseless fools are they who turn from Rāma to worship any other Lord!

[C. 4.] They built the bridge and made it firm and strong, and the gracious Lord was pleased when he saw it. The army marched out, a host beyond description; loud roared the troops of valiant monkeys. On the ramp of the bridge the gracious Raghurāī stood and looked on the great expanse of ocean. All the creatures of the deep came forth in multitudes to see the Lord, the source of mercy. Crocodiles there were and alligators, fish and serpents of every kind, with enormous bodies three hundred leagues in length. Some there were, too, who would devour even these, and these in turn were afraid of others. They gazed at the Lord and nothing would move them; glad were they at heart and blissful; they covered the water and hid it from view, enraptured as they looked on Hari's form. Forth marched the army at the Lord's command; who can tell the number of the monkey host?

[D. 4.] So great was the throng on the bridge that some of the monkeys flew through the air; others mounted on the creatures of the deep and so crossed over to the further side; [C. 5.] and the two brothers laughed as they watched the spectacle.

Then the gracious Raghurāī set forth. Raghubir crossed with the army; the crowd of monkeys and their captains none could number. On the far side of the ocean the Lord pitched his camp, and to all the monkeys he gave command, 'Go and eat luscious fruit and roots'. At the word the bears and monkeys ran this way and that. All the trees bore fruit for Rāma's sake, whether in season or out of season, regarding not the time of year. They ate delicious fruit and shook the trees and hurled mountain peaks towards Lankā. Wherever they found a roving demon, they all surrounded him and led him a pretty dance; they bit off his ears and nose with their teeth and would not let him go till he had sung the Lord's praises.<sup>1</sup>

Those whose ears and noses they had bitten off told Rāvan all that had happened; and when he heard that the ocean had been bridged, he cried out in dismay with all ten mouths, [D. 5.] 'Has he really bridged the sea—the home of springs—the resting-place of streams—the ocean—lord of waters—the floods—the waves—

<sup>1</sup> Or, 'sang the Lord's praises before they let him go'.

the mighty deep—the rolling billows—sovereign of rivers ?<sup>1</sup> [C. 6.] Then realizing his own disquietude, he returned to his palace with a laugh, striving to forget his fears.

When Mandodari heard that the Lord had come and had bridged the ocean as though it were child's play, she grasped her husband's hand and drew him into her own chamber and addressed him in very persuasive terms, bowing her head before his feet and spreading the hem of her robe in the attitude of prayer: 'Hear what I would say, my husband, and be not wroth. Fight, sire, with one whom you can vanquish in strength and understanding. The difference between yourself and Raghupati is of a truth the difference between a firefly and the sun. He who slew the stalwart Madhu and Kaiṭabha and overthrew the valiant sons of Diti, he who bound Bali and killed Sahasrabāhu,<sup>2</sup> has come down to earth to relieve it of its burdens. Strive not, O king, with him in whose hand are fate and destiny and the souls of living creatures !

[D. 6.] 'Deliver up Jānaki to Rāma and bow your head before his lotus feet; entrust the kingdom to your son, go to the woods and worship Raghunāth. [C. 7.] Raghurāī, sire, is merciful to the humble; even a tiger will not devour one who comes to meet him. All that you had to do you have done long since; you have conquered gods and demons and all creation. Saints tell us, O Ten-headed, that a king should retire to the forest when he is old. There worship him, my husband, who is creator, preserver and destroyer. So, lord, abandoning all carnal affections, worship that Raghubīr who loves his suppliants. He for whose sake great sages practise austerities and kings forsake their kingdoms and become ascetics, even that Raghurāya, king of Kosala, has come to have mercy upon you. If, dear husband, you pay heed to my counsel, your fame, fair and pure, will be noised abroad throughout the three spheres.' [D. 7.] So she spoke with tears in her eyes, clasping his feet and trembling all over; 'O king, worship Raghunāth, that I may ever be your happy wedded wife !'

[C. 8.] Then Rāvan raised Maya's daughter and the villain began to boast of his prowess: 'Hearken, dear wife; your fears are vain; what warrior in the world is a match for me ? Varuna, Kuvera, Wind, Yama—all these guardians of the quarters have I overcome

<sup>1</sup> Rāvan uttered each of the ten names for the ocean with one of his ten mouths; the translation of the ten terms must be somewhat arbitrary.

<sup>2</sup> Rāma accomplished these feats as Viṣṇu and in his various incarnations. See App., s.v. Viṣṇu.

by the might of my arm, and Death as well. Gods, demons and men are all in my power; then why should you be afraid ?' She did her best to persuade him but he returned to the council-hall and took his seat, and Mandodari perceived in her heart that his arrogance was due to the influence of fate. In the council he asked his ministers what dispositions they should make to meet the enemy. 'Hearken, Demon King,' replied the ministers; 'why, lord, do you repeatedly ask our advice ? Tell us, what have we to fear that we should take thought for it ? Men, monkeys and bears are food for us !'

[D. 8.] After listening to all they had to say, Prahasta folded his hands and said, 'Lord, act not contrary to sound policy; your ministers have very little judgement. [C. 9.] Your foolish counsellors are flattering you; that, sire, is not the way to win success. One monkey leapt across the ocean and came hither and everyone still remembers his exploits. Was none of you hungry at that time ? Why did you not catch him and eat him when he was burning the city ? Your counsellors have given my lord advice which is pleasant to hear but will only end in sorrow. Tell me, my friend, is he who bridged the ocean, as it were in sport, and encamped on Mount Suvela with his army a mere man whom we shall eat ? No, all their words are empty boasts. Father, pay diligent heed to my words and account me not a coward. There are multitudes of people in the world who speak fair words and listen to them, but there are few, my lord, who speak or listen to words that are harsh to the hearing but very salutary. Now hear the sound advice I give. First, send out envoys; restore Sītā and make your peace. [D. 9.] If, having recovered his bride, Rāma returns home, do nothing more to anger him. If not, then, father, meet him on the battlefield and fight with high resolve. [C. 10.] In either case, my lord, if you follow this my advice, you will enjoy fair fame in the world.'

The Ten-headed answered his son in a fury, 'You fool, who told you to give me such advice ? Have you only just developed these doubts ? You're a prickly thorn-bush, my son, sprung of a bamboo root !' When he heard his father's harsh and cruel words, he went off home, muttering bitterly, 'Wholesome advice has no more effect on you than medicine on a sick man doomed to death !'

Seeing that it was evening, the Ten-headed returned to his palace, looking with pride at his twenty arms. On the topmost point of Lankā there was a building where there was a very splendid

theatre; in that hall Rāvan took his seat and Kinnaras began to sing his praises to the music of cymbals, drums and lutes, while skilful Apsarās danced. [D. 10.] He was perpetually holding revels a hundred times more splendid than those of Indra. Though a foe of invincible might was at his door, he neither cared nor feared. [C. 11.] Now Raghubir had encamped with his army, a mighty, throng, on Mount Suvela. There he saw a very lofty peak, a charming spot with level ground of dazzling brightness. There Laksman with his own hands prepared and spread fresh leaves from the trees and lovely flowers and on them a beautiful soft deerskin; and on that couch the gracious Lord took his seat. The Lord laid his head on the Monkey King's breast; on his right lay his bow and on his left his quiver; with both his lotus hands he trimmed his arrows, and the king of Laṅkā whispered counsel in his ear. Greatly blessed were Āngad and Hanumān, who rubbed and pressed his lotus feet. Behind the Lord Laksman took up the warrior posture, with quiver at his side and bow and arrows in his hand. [D. 11a.] Thus sat Rāma, abode of grace and beauty and virtue.

(Blessed are those who remain ever absorbed in contemplation of this scene.)

[11b.] Looking towards the east, the Lord beheld the risen moon and said to them all, 'Look at the moon, dauntless as the king of beasts! [C. 12.] It dwells in the east as in a mountain cave; in it all power and might and majesty are stored. As a lion, ranging through the woods, cleaves the forehead of a wild elephant, so the moon, roaming the sky, scatters the darkness of the night. The stars are strewn about the sky like pearls to deck the Lady Night. Tell me, my brothers,' said the Lord, 'what are the black marks on the moon? Let each of you offer his opinion.'

'Hearken, Raghurāī,' said Sugrīva; 'it is the shadow of the earth that is seen on the moon.'

'Rāhu struck the moon,' said another, 'and that is why black marks appear on its bosom.'

Another said, 'When God fashioned Rati's face, he took from the moon a part of its essence; that is why a hole can be seen in the moon's breast, and in it is visible the shadow of the sky.'

'Poison,' said the Lord, 'is the friend of the moon, and it has given its best-beloved lodging in its bosom, and it burns up separated lovers with the poisonous rays it sheds.'

[D. 12a.] 'Hear me, Lord,' said Hanumān; 'the moon is your beloved servant; your image dwells upon its breast and shadows forth this darkness.'

[12b.] The all-wise Rāma smiled when he heard the Son of the Wind's fancy. Then looking towards the south, the gracious Lord said, [C. 13.] 'Look, Vibhiṣan, in the direction of the south and see how the clouds are gathering and the lightning flashing. The threatening clouds are softly rumbling; surely there must be a heavy hailstorm.'

'Hearken, gracious Lord,' replied Vibhiṣan; 'that is not lightning, nor is it gathered cloud. On Lāṅkā peak there is a building where the Ten-headed is watching a performance. An umbrella like a cloud-mass shelters his head and looks like a very dark gathering cloud, and, Lord, the earrings in Mandodari's ears are like a flash of lightning; and hearken, king of heaven; cymbals and drums are making marvellous music, and that is the gentle rumble that you heard.'

The Lord smiled and with Rāvaṇ's arrogance in mind strung his bow and fitted an arrow to the string. [D. 13a.] Then with a single shaft he struck down umbrella, crowns and earrings; they fell to the ground in the sight of all, but no one could solve the mystery. [13b.] After performing this feat, Rāma's arrow returned and entered his quiver again, and all in Rāvaṇ's court were terrified when they saw their revels thus rudely interrupted.

[C. 14.] 'There was no earthquake nor any violent gale nor did we see any weapon or missile.' They were all thinking to themselves that it was a grim omen of disaster. When the Ten-headed saw that his courtiers were frightened, he trumped up an argument and said with a laugh, 'When the loss of my heads has always brought good luck, how can the falling of a crown be a bad omen? Now go home, all of you, and go to bed!' They all bowed and went home.

But ever since her earring had dropped to the ground, Mandodari had been troubled in mind. With tears in her eyes and folded hands she said, 'Hear my prayer, O lord of my life! Give up your opposition to Rāma, my husband; be not so obstinate in regarding him as mortal man. [D. 14.] Believe me when I tell you that the jewel of the house of Raghu is the All; for the Vedas declare that in his every limb is the fashioning of a sphere.'

[C. 15.] 'His feet are the lower world, his head the home of Brahmā, and in each one of his limbs there rest the other spheres.'

The play of his eyebrows is dread fate, his eyes are the sun, his hair the massing clouds, his nostrils the two Aśvins; night and day are the perpetual closing and opening of his eyelids; his ears are the ten quarters—so the Vedas declare; his breath is the wind and his voice the holy scriptures; his lips are greed and his fierce teeth the god of death; his smile is illusion and his arms the guardians of the quarters; his face is fire, his tongue the lord of waters and his actions creation, preservation and dissolution. The hairs on his body are the eighteen kinds of trees and shrubs; his bones are the hills and the network of his veins the rivers, his belly the sea and his lower organs hell; in short, the Lord is All; what need of further argument? [D. 15a.] His consciousness of self is Śiva, his reason Brahmā, his mind the moon and the Great One<sup>1</sup> his intelligence; and he, even Rāma the Blessed Lord, who is one with all created things, has come to dwell with us as man. [15b.] Hearken then, lord of my life; consider this and cease to strive with the Lord. Devote yourself to the feet of Raghubīr that so my wedded happiness may not be lost!

[C. 16.] He laughed when he heard his wife's warning and cried, 'Oh, mighty indeed is the power of ignorance! Truly do all say of a woman's nature that there are eight defects ever present in her heart—foolhardiness, falsity, fickleness, deceit, timidity, folly, impurity and cruelty. You have proclaimed the enemy's universal form and have tried to frighten me with your terrible account; but all this that you have been describing, my beloved, is absolutely under my control; now by your kind favour I understand it all. Yes, dear wife, I see through your subtlety; it is but your way of proclaiming my own overlordship! Your words are mysterious, my fawn-eyed wife, but grateful to the understanding and reassuring to the ear.' Mandodarī was inwardly assured that fate had sent her husband's wits astray.

[D. 16a.] Thus did the Ten-headed indulge in pleasantries till day broke; then the Lord of Laṅkā, bold as ever and blinded by pride, entered the council-hall. [S. 16b.] Though the clouds rain nectar upon it, the bamboo bears neither flower nor fruit; so the heart of a fool learns not wisdom though taught by a *guru* like Brahmā.

[C. 17.] Meanwhile Raghurāī awoke at dawn, and calling together his ministers asked them all for their counsel: 'Make haste and

<sup>1</sup> *mahān*: the *śikṣā* identifies this with Viṣṇu. If it is Sāṃkhyan *mahat*, the use is very loose.

tell me what plan we should adopt.' Jāmbavān bowed his head before his feet and said, 'Hearken, O omniscient dweller in the hearts of all, sum of all understanding, might and majesty, righteousness and virtue! I offer what advice I can. Be pleased to send the son of Bāli as an envoy.'

All approved this advice as sound, and the Lord of grace said to Aṅgad, 'O son of Bāli, abode of wisdom, strength and virtue, go to Laṅkā, my friend, in my service. What need is there for me to tell you what to say? I know you to be most discreet. Just speak to the enemy in such a way as to safeguard my interests and benefit him too.'

[S. 17a.] Obedient to his Lord's command, Aṅgad did reverence to his feet and rose saying, 'O Rāma, Lord God, he on whom you shed your grace becomes thereby an ocean of perfection. [17b.] All my Lord's purposes fulfil themselves; it is of your courtesy that you have sent me on this mission.' The Crown Prince trembled with emotion at the thought and rejoiced at heart.

[C. 18.] Doing homage to Rāma's feet and laying his sovereign power upon his heart, Aṅgad bowed to the assembly and went forth. By the favour of the Lord the son of Bāli was of dauntless nature, brave and spirited in battle. As he entered the city, he came on a son of Rāvan who was playing there. Words led to a struggle; they were a pair of matchless strength and in the prime of life. He raised his foot to kick Aṅgad, but Aṅgad caught his foot, swung him round and threw him to the ground. When they saw the mighty warrior, the demon hosts ran this way and that; they could not even cry aloud. One betrayed not the matter to another; they kept silence when they saw the demon prince was dead. But an uproar arose in the city; 'The monkey has come who set Laṅkā on fire!' Terrified, they all began to wonder what God was going to do next. Unasked they showed him the way; did he but look at any, that demon's blood ran cold.

[D. 18.] Then, thinking on Rāma's lotus feet, he came to the door of the hall of assembly. Proud as a lion, he advanced and glanced on this side and on that, staunch warrior, compact of might. [C. 19.] Straightway he sent a demon and reported his coming to Rāvan. When he heard the tidings, the Ten-headed laughed and said, 'Go, fetch the monkey here—wherever it is he comes from!' At his command a number of messengers ran and summoned and brought the noble monkey. To Aṅgad the Ten-headed appeared like a living mountain of soot; his arms were like

trees, his heads like mountain-peaks, the hairs of his body like so many creepers; his mouths, his noses, his eyes and his ears like caves and mountain chasms.

The son of Bāli, mighty and stout of heart, entered his council-hall nor hung back for a moment. The whole assembly rose when they saw the monkey, but in the heart of Rāvan was uncontrollable fury. [D. 19.] Like a lion that goes among a herd of savage elephants, so, inwardly dwelling on Rāma's power, he bowed to the assembly and sat down.

[C. 20.] 'Who are you, monkey?' said the Ten-headed.

'I am a messenger from Raghubir, O Rāvan. You and my father were friends; so, brother, I have come for your good. Of noble family, the grandson of Pulastya, you worshipped Śiva and Brahmā with every rite; you won your boon, and so accomplished all your exploits and conquered the guardians of the spheres and every king. And now, induced by royal pride or folly, you have stolen Sītā, the Mother of the world. Now heed the good advice I give you; then the Lord will pardon all your sins. Put a straw between your teeth and an axe to your throat; come with your family and your wives, placing Janak's daughter reverently before you; come thus without fear and say, "Protector of the suppliant, jewel of the house of Raghu, save me, save me now!" When he hears your piteous cry, the Lord will reassure you.'

[C. 21.] 'Pooh! you son of a monkey! Take care what you say! Fool, know you not that I am an enemy of the gods? Tell me your name, my friend, and your father's, and by what connexion you claim this friendship.'

'My name is Āṅgad, son of Bāli. You met him once, I believe?'

When he heard Āṅgad's reply, he hesitated; 'Yes,' he said, 'there was a Bāli who was a monkey; I am aware of it. If you, Āṅgad, are that Bāli's son, you have been born to destroy your family like a fire among bamboos. Why did you not perish in the womb? To no purpose were you born who with your own lips call yourself an ascetic's envoy. Tell me now, is Bāli well? Where is he?'

Āṅgad laughed and said, 'Go to Bāli ten days hence; clasp your friend to your breast and ask him how he fares. He'll tell you all about the sort of welfare they enjoy who are enemies of Rāma! Listen, fool; his soul is not at unity with itself in whose heart dwells not the Lord Raghubir. [D. 21.] Indeed, Ten-headed, I am the ruin of my house and you the preserver of yours! Even a blind and deaf man would not talk like that, and you have twenty eyes

and ears! [C. 22.] Have I disgraced my family by being the envoy of one whose feet Śiva and Brahmā and all the gods and sages long to serve? That's what you think, and your heart doesn't burst asunder!

When he heard the monkey's insults, the Ten-headed glared threateningly at him and said, 'Wretch, I put up with all your rudeness because I know the laws of courtesy and pious conduct.'

'Yes,' said the monkey, 'I have heard of your pious conduct—stealing another man's wife! With my own eyes I have seen the way you protect an envoy! Go and drown yourself, who thus observe the obligations of chivalry! Doubtless it was from considerations of piety that you forgave it when you saw your sister with her ears and nose cut off! Your pious character is famed throughout the world; thrice blest am I to have had this audience!'

[D. 22a.] 'Stop your blathering, you stupid brute of a monkey! Fool, look at my arms, ready to crush the manifold might of all the guardians of the spheres, as Rāhu swallows the moon. [22b.] Again, in the lake of the sky upon my lotus arms rested resplendent like a swan Kailāsa and Śambhu too! [C. 23.] Listen to me, Aṅgad; tell me what warriors there are in your army fit to fight with me. Your Lord is reft of strength, mourning his absent wife; his younger brother, sorrowing with his sorrow, is dispirited; you and Sugrīva are like two trees on a river bank; my brother is an utter coward; Jāmbavān the counsellor is very old; can he now stand steadfast in battle? True, Nala and Nila are good masons, and there is one monkey who is very strong, the one who came before and burnt the city.'

To this Bāli's son replied, 'Tell me truly, Demon King, did a monkey really burn your city? A little monkey set Rāvan's city on fire? Who that heard it would say it was true? Rāvan, he whom you have praised as a mighty warrior is only Sugrīva's little errand-boy. He can run about well enough, but he's not a fighter; we only sent him to bring back news. [D. 23a.] Did the monkey really burn the city without being told to by the Lord? That's why he didn't come back to Sugrīva but stayed in hiding because he was afraid.

[23b.] 'All you say is true, Ten-headed, and I am not angry when I hear it. There's no one in our army who could win glory by fighting with you. [23c.] It's a good rule that men should be fairly matched in love and war. Will anyone speak well of a lion if he kills frogs? [23d.] Though it's a mere trifle for Rāma and he

would be very wrong to slay you, yet hearken, Ten-headed; the wrath of the warrior caste is a terrible thing !'

[23e.] With the arrows of speech shot from the bow of sarcasm the monkey foe set his heart ablaze. The valiant Rāvan drew them out with the forceps of his answer. [23f.] 'One good quality a monkey does possess,' said the Ten-headed with a laugh; 'he'll do anything for the one who feeds him !' [C. 24.] Hurrah for a monkey who shamelessly skips about in his master's service ! Skipping and jumping and amusing everyone to please his master—that's a monkey's prime duty. Your species, Āngad, is loyal to its master, so naturally you extol his accomplishments like this. I appreciate good qualities and am very understanding, and that's why I pay no heed to your offensive chatter.'

'Yes,' said the monkey, 'the Son of the Wind told me how truly you appreciate good qualities. He laid waste your grove and killed your son and burnt your city and yet you considered he had done you no harm. It was because I realized that generous nature of yours, Ten-headed, that I have ventured to be so bold. All that the monkey told me I have come and seen for myself to be true, that you have no sense of shame, no anger, no irritability.'

'With a wit like that,' said Rāvan, 'you must have been the death of your father, monkey !' and with that the Ten-headed guffawed.

'Yes,' said Āngad, 'and after that I would have been the death of you too, but that I've just thought of something else. It's because I regard you as responsible for Bāli's imperishable renown that I don't slay you, you arrogant brute ! Tell me, Rāvan, how many Rāvans are there in the world ? Listen while I tell you how many I have heard of with my own ears. There was one who went to the lower world to vanquish Bali, and the children tied him up and put him in a stable; then the children made game of him and went and gave him a sound drubbing till Bali took pity on him and had him set free. Then there was another whom Sahasrabāhu saw, and ran and captured like some strange wild beast; he brought him home to make a show of him till the sage Pulastya came and had him released. [D. 24.] There was another of whom I can only speak with great diffidence. He spent some time clapped under Bāli's arm.<sup>1</sup> Which of these Rāvans are you ? Don't be annoyed but tell me plainly.'

<sup>1</sup> The stories of Rāvan's discomfitures are told in an interpolation in the *Bālakāṇḍa*.

[C. 25.] 'Listen, you fool! I am that mighty Rāvan, the prowess of whose arms is known to Kailāsa and his valour to Umā's lord, whom I worshipped, offering my heads in place of flowers. With my own hands I removed my lotus heads and worshipped Tripurāri innumerable times. The guardians of the quarters know the power of my arms, and even now, you fool, they are tormented by it. The elephants of the quarters know the hardness of my breast; for whenever I grappled with them in bitter conflict their fierce tusks left no impression on my body<sup>1</sup> but broke off like radishes as soon as they struck my chest. He at whose movement earth reels like a little boat when a wild elephant comes aboard, even that Rāvan am I, all-powerful, famed throughout the world! Have you never heard of that one, you babbling liar? [D. 25.] And that's the Rāvan whose power you minimize while you exalt a mere man! You miserable little savage of a monkey, now I see how much you know!'

[C. 26.] At this Āngad waxed furious and exclaimed, 'Take care what you say, you arrogant brute! He whose axe was a fire to consume the boundless forest of Sahasrabāhu's arms, he whose axe was a sea in whose swift current numberless kings have been drowned time after time, he at the very sight of whom even that same Paraśurāma's pride was humbled—can he be a mere man, you miserable ten-headed monster? How can Rāma be a mortal man, you obstinate idiot? Is Kāmadeva an ordinary archer? Is Gaṅgā an ordinary stream? Is the cow of heaven just an ordinary head of cattle, or the tree of Paradise no more than a tree? Is corn a mere gift of charity, or ambrosia only a liquid? Is Garuḍ just a bird, or Śeṣanāga a snake, or the philosopher's stone an ordinary pebble? Listen, Rāvan, you senseless fool! Is Vaikuntha a world like any other, or steadfast faith in Raghupati an ordinary blessing? [D. 26.] And was that Hanumān a mere monkey, you fool, who crushed your pride and that of your army, laid waste your grove, set fire to your city and slew your son and so returned?

[C. 27.] 'Now listen to me, Rāvan, and have done with your tricks; worship Raghunāth, the Lord of grace. If you persist in your opposition to Rāma, you villain, not even Brahmā or Rudra can save you. No more of your vain boasting, fool! If you contend with Rāma, the consequence will be that the whole lot

<sup>1</sup> *na phāṭe*: so the *fīkā*; or, 'which had never been broken before'.

of your heads will come tumbling on the ground before the monkeys at the stroke of Rāma's arrows. Then the bears and monkeys will play polo with your heads like so many balls. When Raghunāyak takes the field in his wrath and flights of keen arrows speed from his bow, of what avail will be your boasting then? Remember this and worship the generous Rāma !

At this Rāvan's wrath blazed up afresh like a great flaming fire when *ghī* is cast upon it. [D. 27.] 'Have I not Kumbhakarṇa for a brother,' he cried, 'and the famed Meghanāda for a son? Have you never heard of my own prowess too, how I conquered the whole of creation? [C. 28.] Fool, he has called in the monkeys to help him and bridged the ocean, and that's all his claim to greatness. Plenty of birds traverse the sea, but they are no great heroes. Listen, you stupid monkey; each one of my arms is as full of strength as the ocean of water and many are the valiant gods and men who have been drowned in their waves! What champion is there who will win to the further shore of these twenty deep and boundless oceans? I made the guardians of the quarters draw water for me, and you prate to me, you wretch, of the glory of a king! If that master of yours whose praises you are perpetually singing is such a mighty warrior on the field, then why does he send an ambassador? Isn't he ashamed of making peace with an enemy? Just look at my arms that overthrew Kailāsa and then extol your master, you fool of a monkey.'

[D. 28.] 'What hero is there to equal Rāvan, who with his own hands cut off his heads and times without number offered them with the utmost cheerfulness as a burnt offering in the fire, Gauri's lord be my witness? [C. 29.] When my skulls were burning and I saw the letters traced on my foreheads by the Creator, and read that I was to die at the hands of a man, I laughed because I knew that God's prophecy was a lie. When I remember that, I am not in the least afraid; the Creator must have been senile and half-witted when he wrote it. You fool, you've lost all sense of shame and honour, repeatedly prating of another hero's might compared with mine!'

'Rāvan,' said Angad, 'there's no one in the world as modest as you; you are so modest by nature that you never blow your own trumpet! You can't get the stories of your heads and the mountain out of your mind, and that's why you have repeated them twenty times over. But you have hidden deep in your heart that strength of arm with which you conquered Sahasrabāhu, Bali and Bāli!'

Listen, you stupid fool; enough of all this! Is a man a hero because he cuts off his heads? An illusionist is not called a hero though he cut off the whole of his body with his own hands. [D. 29.] Just consider and see, you senseless idiot! Moths burn themselves in their infatuation and donkeys carry loads, but they are not called heroes.

[C. 30.] ‘Now, wretch, no more of your bragging, but sink your pride and listen to my advice. I have not come as an ambassador to make terms, Ten-headed. This is what Raghubīr had in mind when he sent me; the gracious Lord kept on saying, “No glory is to be gained by a lion in slaying a jackal”, and it is because I remember what my Lord said that I have put up with your insolence, you fool. Else would I have broken your head and carried off Sītā by force. I acknowledge your might, you vile foe of the gods, in that you stole away another’s wife when she was all alone! You are the Demon King and great is your pride, and I am only the envoy of Raghupati’s servant; but if I were not afraid of displeasing Rāma, I would, as soon as look at you, make a spectacle of you like this [D. 30.]—I would hurl you to the ground, overthrow your army, destroy your city and carry off Janak’s daughter, fool, with the young women of your household!

[C. 31.] ‘But if I did this, I should gain no glory, for there’s no great bravery in slaying the dead. A follower of the left-hand path,<sup>1</sup> a confirmed lecher, a miser, an utter fool, a destitute beggar, a notorious rascal, a very old man, a chronic invalid, one who is habitually passionate, an enemy of Viṣṇu, a foe of scripture and the saints, a self-indulgent man, a censorious critic and a man steeped in vice—these fourteen are corpses even while they live. With this in mind, you villain, I refrain from slaying you; but don’t provoke me any further!’

At this the Demon King bit his lips and rubbed his hands together in a rage and cried, ‘Vile monkey, it’s death you’re looking for now! Big words from a little mouth! He on whom you rely, brutish ape, when you babble these insults has neither might nor power, neither understanding nor majesty. [D. 31a.] It was because he knew he had no virtue or dignity that his father exiled him to the forest; and on top of this sorrow and the loss of his young bride he lives in terror of me night and day! [31b.] Why,

<sup>1</sup> *kaula*, or *vāmamārgī*: one who practises the ritual of the *tantras*, i.e., the worship of the *sakti*, or female energy personified as the wife of Śiva, in its grosser form.

every night and day the demons eat numberless men like him on whose strength you boast such proud reliance; just think of that, you fool, and don't be so obstinate !'

[C. 32.] When he abused Rāma, the monkey prince grew furious; for he who even listens to blasphemy against Hari or Hara commits a sin equal to the slaughter of a cow. The mighty monkey gnashed his teeth in rage and struck the earth furiously with his two arms; earth reeled and the councillors fell flat on the ground and fled in panic as though struck by a tornado. The Ten-headed fell, but recovered from his fall and arose, and his splendid crowns lay strewn upon the ground. Some he picked up and set straight upon his heads, some Āṅgad hurled towards the Lord. When they saw the crowns coming, the monkeys ran away crying, 'O God, have stars begun to shoot in the daytime ? Or has Rāvan in his fury dispatched four thunderbolts that come speeding along like this ?' 'Don't be afraid,' said the Lord with a smile; 'these are not shooting stars or thunderbolts, nor are they Ketu or Rāhu; they are the Ten-headed's crowns that are arriving, sent here by Bāli's son.'

[D. 32a.] The Son of the Wind leapt up and seized them and brought them and set them before the Lord, while the bears and monkeys watched the spectacle. The crowns flashed like the sun.

[32b.] Meanwhile, the Ten-headed in a paroxysm of fury shouted to them all, 'Seize that monkey ! Seize him and kill him !' Āṅgad smiled when he heard him. [C. 33.] 'And after that, my warriors, run out at once and devour the bears and monkeys wherever you may find them ! Rid the earth of monkeys, but catch the two hermit brothers alive !'

Then the Crown Prince cried in a rage, 'Aren't you ashamed to brag and bluster ? Cut your throat and die, you shameless ruin of your race ! Are you not terrified when you see our strength ? Adulterous woman-stealer, filthy, senseless, lustful brute ! You must be mad to babble such insolent abuse ! You scoundrelly demon, fast in the toils of fate, you'll reap your reward for this later on when the monkeys and bears cuff you ! Don't your tongues drop out, braggart, when you speak of Rāma as an ordinary man ? Assuredly, they will drop off, and your heads too, on the field of battle !'

[S. 33a.] 'How can he be no more than a man, Ten-headed, who slew Bāli with a single shaft ? You're blind for all your twenty eyes. A curse on the day of your birth, you base-born blockhead !

[33b.] Rāma's arrows are all thirsting for your blood, and that's why I let you go, vile demon and insolent babbler! [C. 34.] I'm quite capable of breaking your teeth, but Raghunāyak has not told me to do so; I'm angry enough to smash all ten of your heads and to pick up Laṅkā and sink it in the sea. Your Laṅkā is like a fig and you demons the insects that live at ease in it; I'm a monkey and I'd gobble up the fruit in a trice, but the noble-hearted Rāma has not bidden me do so.'

Rāvan smiled when he heard this comparison and said, 'You fool, where did you learn to tell all these lies? Bāli never used to brag like this; it must be your association with the hermits that has made you a liar.'

'O Twenty-armed,' said Āngad, 'truly indeed am I a liar if I don't tear out your ten tongues by their roots!' Then, as he thought on Rāma's mighty power, the monkey waxed furious, and planting his foot firmly in the midst of the assembly, he challenged him, 'If you can move my foot, you fool, Rāma will turn back and I will admit the loss of Sītā.'

'Listen, all you warriors,' said the Ten-headed; 'seize his foot and throw the monkey to the ground!' Indrajit and a number of other stalwart warriors eagerly got up from their several seats and leapt on him, but in spite of all their strength and feints Āngad's foot did not stir, and they sat down again, bowing their heads in shame. Again the enemies of the gods arose and pounced upon him, but they could no more move the monkey's foot, Garur, than a sensuous man can root up the tree of infatuation. [D. 34a.] Myriads of warriors as mighty as Meghanāda eagerly arose and sprang at him, but the monkey's foot did not budge, and they took their seats again with bowed heads. [34b.] Just as the soul of a saint abandons not virtue though encompassed by a myriad hindrances, so did the monkey's foot not leave the earth. Fled was the pride of the foe when he saw it.

[C. 35.] They were all dispirited when they saw the monkey's strength till Rāvan himself arose to meet his challenge. When he caught hold of his foot, the son of Bāli said, 'You won't be saved by grasping *my* foot! Why don't you go and grasp Rāma's feet, you fool?' At this Rāvan turned away, utterly ashamed; gone were his majesty and all his dignity, as the moon waxes dim at noon tide. With bowed head he took his seat upon his throne, as though he had lost all his possessions. How can one enjoy peace of mind if one strives with Rāma, soul of the world and lord

of life? At the play of Rāma's eyebrows, O Umā, the universe comes into being and is again dissolved; he makes a thunderbolt weak as a blade of grass and a blade of grass strong as a thunderbolt. How then can his envoy's challenge fail?

Once more the monkey gave him all kinds of good advice, but he heeded it not, for his hour was drawing near. So, having crushed his enemy's pride and proclaimed the glory of his Lord, the son of king Bāli departed saying, 'I shall give you a good drubbing on the field, so why should I bother myself about you now?' Rāvan was sad when he heard that the monkey had already slain his son and all the demons were terror-stricken at the success of Aṅgad's challenge.

[D. 35a.] Having crushed his enemy's might, the powerful monkey, son of Bāli, clasped Rāma's lotus feet with joy; he trembled with emotion and tears were in his eyes.

[35b.] Seeing it was evening, the Ten-headed returned despondently to his palace, and Mandodari once more spoke words of warning to Rāvan: [C. 36.] 'Reflect, husband, and abandon evil counsel; it is not meet that you should fight with Raghupati. You could not even step over the little line that Rāma's younger brother drew;<sup>1</sup> so far your manly courage extends! Husband, can you conquer him in battle whose messenger performs such exploits? That lion of a monkey leapt the sea as though in sport and entered dauntless the city of Laṅkā. He slew the watchmen and laid waste the grove; he burnt the city and reduced the whole to ashes; where then was your vaunted strength? Now, husband, boast no more in vain; pay some heed to my advice. My lord, deem not Raghupati to be a mere king but know him to be Lord of creation, peerless in might. Mārīca knew the power of his arrow but you heeded not his warning in your base folly. In Janak's court were innumerable princes, and you too were there in overwhelming might. He broke the bow and wedded Jānaki; why did you not conquer him in battle at that time? The son of heaven's king knows something of his strength; he robbed him of an eye and left him with his life. You saw what happened to Śūrpanakha and yet you are no whit ashamed. [D. 36.] He who slew Virādha, Khara and Dūṣana and killed Kabandha with ease and laid Bāli low with a single arrow—understand, Ten-headed who he is!

<sup>1</sup> The magic line drawn to protect Sītā when she was left alone. This is mentioned in other accounts, but not in Tulasi Dās's narrative.

[C. 37.] 'He to whom the binding of ocean's monarch was but child's play, the Lord who rested on Mount Suvela with his host, that merciful Banner of the Solar race sent you an envoy for your good. He brought your power to nought in the midst of the assembly, like the king of beasts among a herd of elephants. Him whose servants are Āngad and Hanumān, stout champions and steadfast warriors, again and again, husband, you assert to be but man and vainly vaunt your pride and selfish arrogance. Alas, my lord, you have opposed Rāma; there is no wisdom in your soul; it is the influence of Doom! Doom takes no rod to beat its victim; it robs a man of piety, strength, reason and sound judgement; and he whose Doom draws near is lost in error, even as you are now, my husband. [D. 37.] Two of your sons have perished and your city has been burnt. Now, husband, make an end; worship Raghunāth, ocean of grace, and win, my lord, glory without stain!'

[C. 38.] After listening to his wife's words that pierced him like an arrow, Rāvan arose at daybreak and went to the council-hall and took his seat upon his throne, swollen with conceit and forgetful of all his fears.

Meanwhile, Rāma sent for Āngad, who came and bowed his head before his lotus feet. With the utmost courtesy Kharārī, Lord of grace, seated him by his side and said with a smile, 'O son of Bāli, tell me truly, my friend, when I ask you—for I am very curious to know—Rāvan being the glory of the demon race and renowned throughout the world for his unparalleled strength of arm, how, my friend, did you get hold of those four crowns which you sent me? Pray tell me.'

'Hearken, omniscient Lord,' said Āngad, 'who bring joy to your suppliants, those were not crowns but four royal prerogatives; conciliation, bribery, punishment and the causing of dissension—these four, Lord, dwell in the heart of a king, as the Vedas declare; they are the noble feet on which statecraft and religion stand; realizing this, they have come to my Lord. [D. 38a.] The Ten-headed has no religion; he has rebelled against the Lord and is doomed to death; and—believe me, king of Kosala—that is why these prerogatives have deserted him and come to you!' [38b.] The generous Rāma laughed at his very quaint conceit, and Bāli's son gave him a full account of the fort.

[C. 39.] When Rāma had received his report of the foe, he summoned to him all his ministers and said, 'Consider how the four stout gates of Lankā may be stormed'. Then the Monkey King

and the king of the bears and Vibhiṣan, with their thoughts fixed on the jewel of the Solar race, took counsel together and made their decision; they divided the army of monkeys into four companies and appointed captains, each suited to his task. They then called all the commanders together, and impressing on them the power of the Lord, gave them their orders. When they heard them, the monkeys rushed forward roaring like lions. Joyfully they bowed their heads before Rāma's feet, and grasping mountain-peaks all the warriors rushed out. Bears and monkeys roared aloud and challenged the foe, crying, 'Victory to Raghubīr, king of Kosala!' The monkeys knew that Laṅkā was a fortress very hard to storm, but on they went, dauntless in the power of their Lord. They surrounded the city on all sides like an enveloping cloud and made martial music with bugles at their mouths. [D. 39.] 'Victory to Rāma! Victory to Lakṣman! Victory to Sugrīva, king of the monkeys!' They roared like lions, the monkeys and the valiant bears.

[C. 40.] In Laṅkā was loud uproar and the arrogant Ten-headed heard it. 'Look at the impudence of these monkeys!' he cried, and laughing summoned his demon host. 'They have come, these monkeys, at the instance of Doom! All my demons are hungry!' So saying, the fool gave vent to a loud guffaw. 'God has given them easy meat! Go ye, my warriors all, on all four sides; seize the bears and monkeys and devour the lot!' Rāvan's conceit, Umā, was as that of the sandpiper which sleeps with its legs in the air.<sup>1</sup>

On came the demons, thus bidden, grasping in their hands slings and stout lances, clubs, maces and heavy battle-axes, pikes, scimitars, bludgeons and masses of mountain rock. Just as stupid flesh-eating birds swoop down on a heap of rubies when they spy it and care not for the pain of broken beaks, so rushed on the senseless man-eating monsters to the fray. [D. 40.] Armed with bows and arrows and all kinds of weapons, millions and millions of demons, valorous and mighty, mounted the battlements of the fort.

[C. 41.] On the battlements of the fort they looked like clouds on the peaks of Mount Meru. Drums sounded and other martial instruments, and at the noise the warriors were stirred to fighting frenzy. Countless were the trumpets and bugles that brayed and the hearts of cowards who heard them quaked. They came and saw the crowds of monkeys and monstrous bears, doughty warriors,

<sup>1</sup> and thinks it is holding up the sky.

as they rushed on, recking naught of the steepness of the mountain ways. They seized and burst asunder hills and cleared themselves a road. Myriads of warriors snapped and roared; they bit their lips with their teeth and snarled threats. On the one side they called on Rāvan, on the other on Rāma. 'Victory! Victory!' they shouted, and the battle began. When the demons cast down masses of rock, the monkeys sprang and caught them and hurled them back again.

[Ch. 1.] The fearsome monkeys and bears caught the mountain crags and hurled them at the fort. Pouncing upon a foe, they seized him by the foot and dashed him to the ground, then ran off and again shouted defiance. Very agile, young and powerful, they kept leaping up on the fort with angry threats, and bounding up everywhere on the palaces, the monkeys and the bears sang the praises of Rāma. [D. 41.] Again, each clutching a demon, the monkeys ran off and then came dropping to the ground with themselves on the top and the warrior foe beneath.

[C. 42.] By the power of Rāma the strong monkey host trampled down the throng of fighting demons. Again the monkeys mounted the fort on all sides, crying, 'Victory to Raghubir, glorious as the sun!' The demon host fled like massed clouds driven by a mighty wind. There was grievous lamentation in the city; children and women wailed distressfully. All as one abused Rāvan, who, king though he was, had summoned death. When the king of Laṅkā heard that his army was routed, he rallied his warriors in a rage. 'If I hear of anyone turning to flee from the battlefield,' he cried, 'I will slay him with my dread sword! You have eaten of my bounty and enjoyed every luxury and now you grudge to give your lives in battle!' Hearing these cruel words, all trembled; angry and ashamed, the warriors turned back. They thought, 'It is a soldier's glory to die with his face to the foe,' and they were then no longer eager to escape with their lives.

[D. 42.] Armed with many a weapon, all the warriors kept challenging one another and fighting. They discomfited the bears and monkeys, smiting them with bludgeon and trident. [C. 43.] The monkeys began to flee in terror (though, Umā, they were going to win the day in the end). Cried one, 'Where are Angad and Hanumān? Where are Nala and Nila and the valiant Dvivida?' The valiant Hanumān was at the western gate when he heard that the army was routed; there Meghanāda was fighting; the gate would not be forced and great was the peril. Then the Son of the

Wind waxed furious; like resistless Doom the warrior roared. He sprang up to the top of Laṅkā fort, and seizing a hill, rushed at Meghanāda. He shattered the chariot, hurled out the driver and planted a kick on Meghanāda's breast. Another charioteer saw that he was sore beset; he threw him on to his chariot and brought him home in haste.

[D. 43.] When Aṅgad heard that the Son of the Wind had gone up into the fort alone, that stalwart warrior, Bāli's son, leapt up to join him as a monkey leaps in sport. [C. 44.] In furious and determined resistance the two monkeys, inwardly dwelling on Rāma's mighty power, together sprang with a rush to the top of Rāvaṇ's palace, shouting, 'For the king of Kosala!' They seized and overthrew the palace, pinnacles and all, and the Demon King was terrified at the sight; and all the women beat their breasts and cried, 'Now two of these violent monkeys have come!' They frightened the women with threatening grimaces and proclaimed aloud the glory of Rāmacandra. Then they clutched the golden columns with their hands and cried, 'Now we'll make a start on our destruction!' They leapt down with a roar into the midst of the enemy's army and began to crush them with the mighty strength of their arms, kicking some and cuffing others and shouting, 'You won't worship Rāma? Then take the consequences!' [D. 44.] They crushed one against another, and smashing off their heads hurled them away. The heads came tumbling in front of Rāvaṇ and burst open like pots of curd.

[C. 45.] All the great commanders they could find they seized by the foot and tossed to the Lord. Vibhiṣan told him their names and Rāma granted even them a place in his own realm. Those villainous cannibals that ate the flesh of Brāhmans won to a blessed state that contemplatives crave! O Umā, Rāma is tender-hearted and full of compassion; these demons, he thought, had him in mind, though it be in a spirit of enmity, and therefore he bestowed upon them final liberation. Tell me, Bhavānī, who is so merciful as he? Insensate are they and altogether hapless who turn not from error to worship him when they hear of a Lord like that.

'Aṅgad and Hanumān have entered the fort,' so said the lord of Avadh, 'and the two monkeys in Laṅkā look like a pair of Mandaras churning up the ocean.'

[D. 45.] After crushing and destroying the enemy's hosts with the might of their arms they perceived that night was falling and, forgetting their fatigue, came bounding back together to the Blessed

Lord. [C. 46.] They bowed their heads before the Lord's lotus feet, and Raghupati was pleased to see his champions. Graciously Rāma looked upon the pair and they forgot all their weariness and were utterly happy.

When they found that Aṅgad and Hanumān had left the field, all the fighting bears and monkeys turned to follow them; but the demons, renewing their strength as night fell, made a fresh onslaught, shouting, 'For Rāvan!' Seeing the demon army coming on, the monkeys turned again and boldly closed on every side, gnashing their teeth in fury. Both hosts were powerful and fought with shouts of defiance, nor would the warriors on either side admit defeat. All the demons were very valiant and black, while the monkeys were enormous and of various hues; both the armies were powerful and their warriors equally matched in strength; furiously they fought, performing marvellous feats of prowess. It was as though dense clouds of the rainy season were clashing with autumn clouds, driven by the wind.

When their line began to waver, the captains Akarīpana and Atikāya wrought a magic illusion; there fell in a moment a thick darkness with a shower of blood and stones and ashes. [D. 46.] Beholding the dense darkness in all the ten quarters, the monkey host fell into confusion; they could not see each other but shouted to one another on this side and on that. [C. 47.] But Raghunāyak understood the whole mystery and, summoning Aṅgad and Hanumān, he explained all that was happening. When they heard it, the mighty monkeys rushed forth in a rage. Then the gracious Lord strung his bow with a smile and straightway shot forth an arrow of fire; once more there was light and the darkness fled, scattered like doubts when knowledge dawns. The bears and monkeys, finding it light again, joyously made onslaught, forgetting their fatigue and fear.

Hanumān and Aṅgad roared aloud in the battle and at the sound of their defiant cries the demons took to flight. Seizing the warriors as they fled, the bears and monkeys dashed them to the ground and performed marvellous feats of valour. They caught them by their feet and cast them into the sea, where the crocodiles and serpents and fishes seized and devoured them. [D. 47.] Some were slain, some were wounded and some fled to the shelter of the fort; the bears and monkeys roared exultantly over the rout of the enemy's forces.

[C. 48.] Seeing it was now night, the four divisions of the monkey army returned to the lord of Kosala. Graciously Rāma looked upon them all and at once the monkeys forgot their weariness. On the other side the Ten-headed called together his ministers and told them all what warriors had been slain. ‘The monkeys have overthrown half our army,’ he said; ‘now tell me quickly what strategy we should adopt.’ There was a very old demon, Mālyavān, who was Rāvan’s maternal grandfather and a wise counsellor. He gave the following very sound advice: ‘Hearken, my son, and pay some heed to my counsel. Ever since you stole Sītā and brought her here, the omens have been unspeakably inauspicious. No one has ever been at peace who has opposed Rāma, whose glory Veda and Purāṇa have hymned. [D. 48a.] He who slew Hiranyakṣa and his brother, Madhu and the mighty Kaitabha, has become incarnate, even the Blessed Lord of grace. [48b.] Who can contend with him whom Śiva and Brahmā adore, Death himself, a fire to consume the forest of vice, the sum of all perfection and wisdom? [C. 49.] Fight with him no more, but restore the princess of Videha and worship the Lord of infinite grace and love.’

His words pierced Rāvan like an arrow. ‘For shame, you miserable wretch!’ he cried. ‘Begone! If you weren’t so old, I should have you put to death; as it is, don’t dare to show me your face again!’ Mālyavān thought to himself, ‘Evidently the gracious Lord would fain slay him’. He rose and departed with harsh words on his lips.

Then spoke Meghanāda angrily: ‘Just see the feats I shall perform in the morning! I shall do much—a great deal more than I can say!’ Rāvan regained confidence when he heard his son’s boasts and took him affectionately on his lap.

Day dawned while they were still making their plans. The monkeys once more were at the four gates and were furiously encompassing the inaccessible fort. There was a loud uproar in the city. The demons rushed into battle with every kind of weapon and hurled down mountain-peaks from the fort. [Ch. 2.] Myriads of mountain-peaks they hurled down; all kinds of missiles shot forth with the noise of the falling of a thunderbolt, and their roar was like that of clouds on the day of dissolution. The formidable monkey warriors closed; they were cut to pieces but gave no ground though their bodies were riddled with wounds. They

picked up rocks and hurled them at the fort and the demons were slain where they stood.

[D. 49.] When Meghanāda heard that they had come again and besieged the fort, he boldly sallied forth from his stronghold with beat of drum to face the foe. [C. 50.] 'Where are the two brothers, princes of Kosala, archers renowned throughout all the spheres? Where are Nala and Nila, Dvividha and Sugrīva, Aṅgad and Hanumān, towers of strength? Where is Vibhīṣan, his brother's enemy? This day I shall assuredly slay all those, and Rāma too!' So saying, he made ready his dread arrows and in raging wrath drew the bow-string to his ear. He sent forth flights of arrows that sped like a multitude of winged serpents. On every side monkeys might be seen falling to the ground; there was no one who could face him at that hour. The monkeys and bears took to flight in all directions and none had any stomach for the fight; and on the field of battle not a monkey or a bear could be seen that he had left with more than their bare lives. [D. 50.] He struck them all with ten shafts each and the gallant monkeys fell to the ground; like a lion Meghanāda roared, exulting in his resistless might.

[C. 51.] When the Son of the Wind saw that the army was in distress, he rushed furiously forth like Death; he rooted up forthwith an enormous crag and hurled it at Meghanāda in an access of wrath. Meghanāda saw it coming and sprang into the air, but his chariot and charioteer and horses were all smashed to pieces. Again and again Hanumān shouted a challenge but he would not come near him, for he was well aware of his mysterious might. Then Meghanāda approached Raghupati and poured out all kinds of insolent abuse and hurled at him all his weapons and missiles; but the Lord made game of them, cutting them to bits and warding them off. The fool was mortified when he saw his mighty power and began to employ all sorts of illusory magic, as though one should take a tiny baby snake and play with Garuḍ, pretending to frighten him. [D. 51.] The silly demon was practising his illusions to baffle him to whose illusion Śiva and Brahmā are subject and all, both great and small!

[C. 52.] He mounted up into the sky and rained down showers of sparks, and streams of water gushed forth from the earth; all sorts of goblins, male and female, danced about and shouted, 'Kill him! Hack him to pieces!' He showered down ordure and pus and blood and hair and bones, and then again let fly a number of

stones. He rained down dust and created such a darkness that one could not see one's hand before one's face. The monkeys were greatly disturbed when they saw this illusion, thinking that if things went on like that their doom was sealed. Rāma smiled at the sight of the magic show; but when he realized that all the monkeys were terrified, he cleft asunder the whole illusion with a single arrow, as when the lord of day scatters thick darkness. He turned his gracious glance upon the monkeys and the bears and they became so strong that nothing could restrain them from rushing into battle.

[D. 52.] With Rāma's permission Lakṣman, with Āṅgad and the other monkeys, sallied forth in fury, bow and arrows in hand, [C. 53.] with bloodshot eyes, broad chest, long arms, and body radiant as the snow-capped Himālaya, rosy-flushed. Meanwhile the Ten-headed sent forth his warriors, who took up their various weapons and rushed out. On came the monkeys, armed with mountains, claws and trees, shouting, 'Victory to Rāma!' All joined in close combat, one champion equally matched with another, each determined to win the victory. The monkeys cuffed and kicked them and bit them with their teeth, and then belaboured them and threatened them with shouts of triumph: 'Kill them! Kill them! Seize them! Seize, seize, kill them! Smash their heads! Clutch and tear out their arms!' Such were the shouts that rang through the nine regions, and everywhere grim trunks ran to and fro; and from the sky the assembled gods looked down upon the wondrous sight, now in dismay and now in ecstasy.

[D. 53.] Blood filled the hollows and congealed, while dust flew thick above them like ashes that conceal a heap of glowing embers. [C. 54.] The wounded heroes looked like *kimśuka*<sup>1</sup> trees in blossom. Lakṣman and Meghanāda, warriors both, were fighting hand to hand with the utmost fury. Neither could overcome the other. The demon was practising guile and trickery and all that was contrary to the laws of chivalry. Lakṣman, infuriated, shattered in a moment the chariot and its driver; many a stroke did Lakṣman deal the demon so that he was left barely alive. The son of Rāvan thought to himself, 'I am in sore straits; he will take my life'. Then he let fly his lance, the doom of heroes, fierce and keen, and it struck Lakṣman in the breast. Smitten by the lance, he fell insensible, and Meghanāda approached him without fear. [D. 54.]

<sup>1</sup> Or *dhāka*: *Butea frondosa*.

Hundreds and thousands of warriors as strong as Meghanāda tried to lift him up; but how could Śeṣa, the world's support, be raised? They went off mortified.

[C. 55.] Hearken, Girījā; who can conquer him in battle, the fire of whose wrath consumes in a flash the fourteen spheres, him whom gods and men and all creation reverence? But he alone can understand this mystery on whom is shed the grace of Rāma.

It was evening, and both armies left the field and began to rally their several forces. The all-pervading Absolute, invincible Lord of the world, the merciful, asked, 'Where is Lakṣman?' At that moment Hanumān bore him in, and when he saw his younger brother, the Lord grieved sore. 'There lives in Laṅkā a physician named Suṣepa,' said Jāmbavān: 'who will be sent to fetch him?' Hanumān assumed a tiny form and straightway went and brought him, house and all. [D. 55.] Suṣepa came and bowed his head before Raghupati's lotus feet, and naming a mountain and a herb thereon, he bade the Son of the Wind go and fetch it.

[C. 56.] Laying Rāma's lotus feet upon his heart, the Son of the Wind set out, boasting of his might. A spy reported the matter to Rāvan, who went off to the house of Kālanemi; there the Ten-headed repeated what he had learnt, and when Kālanemi heard it, he beat his head again and again crying, 'Who can stay him on his way who burnt the city before your very eyes? Consult your own interests by worshipping Raghupati and have done, lord, with these vain wranglings. Lay upon your heart the delight of all eyes, whose form is beautiful and dark as the dark-blue lotus! No more of the folly of "I" and "Thou" and "Mine"—you are sleeping in the night of utter ignorance! Awake! Is it possible that he should be vanquished in battle who devours the serpent of Death?'

[D. 56.] His words exasperated the Ten-headed; so he thought to himself, 'Better were it to perish at the hands of Rāma's messenger; this villain is devoted to nothing but vice.' [C. 57.] So saying, he departed and wrought an illusion by the way, fashioning a lake and a temple and a beautiful garden. When the Son of the Wind beheld this pleasant retreat, he thought, 'Let me ask the sage's leave and drink some water to relieve my fatigue'. The demon was sitting there in disguise, thinking to delude the messenger of the Lord of delusion! When the Son of the Wind came and bowed before him, he began to sing Rāma's praises, saying, 'A great battle is going on between Rāvan and Rāma, but Rāma will assuredly triumph; though I sit here, my brother, I can see it all,

for I am possessed of a marvellous power of spiritual sight'. The monkey asked for water and the demon handed him a water-pot; but he said it was not enough to satisfy his thirst. 'Go and bathe in the lake,' said the demon, 'and come back quickly; then I will grant you initiation, whereby you may attain to wisdom.'

[D. 57.] As the monkey was entering the lake, a female crocodile seized his foot in alarm; whereupon he slew her, and she, assuming a celestial form, mounted a chariot and ascended to the heavens. [C. 58.] 'Monkey,' she said, 'the sight of you has rid me of my sin, and, friend, the sage's curse has been annulled. This is no hermit, but a dreadful demon; doubt not, monkey, that my words are true.' As soon as the Apsarā had said this and disappeared, the monkey approached the demon and said, 'First, O sage, receive the gift that is due to a spiritual guide, then afterwards teach me the spell.' He then twisted his tail round his head and threw him to the ground, and as he died, the demon reassumed his proper form and crying, 'Rāma! Rāma!' he expired. When Hanumān heard his cry, he went on his way rejoicing.

The monkey saw the mountain but could not identify the herb, so he straightway tore the mountain up by the roots, and clutching it went speeding through the air by night and passed over the city of Avadh. [D. 58.] Bharat saw a great shape overhead and thought it must be a demon; so he pulled the bowstring to his ear and shot a headless arrow. [C. 59.] Struck by the arrow, Hanumān fell swooning to the ground, muttering, 'Rāma, Rāma, Raghuṇāyak!' When Bharat heard those beloved names, he came running with all speed to the monkey, and seeing he was in pain, he clasped him to his bosom and did his best to arouse him, but all in vain. With melancholy mien and sorrowing heart he spoke these words, and his eyes were full of tears: 'God who made me injure Rāma has added this grievous distress. If in thought and word and deed I have unfeigned love for Rāma's lotus feet, and if Raghu-pati is graciously inclined towards me, may the monkey recover from his weariness and pain.' Hearing this prayer, the monkey chief sat up, crying, 'Glory, glory to the lord of Kosala!'

[S. 59.] Bharat clasped the monkey to his bosom; he trembled with emotion and his eyes were full of tears; his heart could scarce contain his devotion as he thought on Rāma, the glory of the house of Raghu. [C. 60.] 'Tell me, my friend,' he said, 'how fares the Lord of bliss, and his brother too and the lady Jānaki?' The monkey told him briefly all that had happened, whereat he sorrowed,

sad at heart. 'Alas, my fate! Why was I born into the world? I have never been of any use to my Lord!' Then, perceiving that this was not the time for lamentation, he composed himself, the valiant prince, and again addressed the monkey: 'My friend, you will be late in arriving and your efforts will be in vain, for day is breaking; mount then on my arrow, hill and all, and I will send you to the Lord of grace.' His words aroused the monkey's pride. 'How', he thought, 'can the arrow travel with my weight upon it?' Then, remembering the power of Rāma, the monkey did reverence to his feet and said with folded hands, [D. 60a.] 'I shall lay your mighty power on my heart, O lord and master, and so journey right swiftly.' With these words Hanumān did obeisance to his feet and took his leave and set forth. [60b.] As he travelled on, the Son of the Wind repeatedly extolled in his heart the might of Bharat's arm, his loving-kindness and his virtue and his boundless devotion to the feet of the Lord.

[C. 61.] Meanwhile Rāma was gazing on Laksman and speaking to him as an ordinary man would speak. 'Half the night has passed and the monkey has not yet come.' Rāma raised his brother and clasped him to his breast. 'Brother,' he said, 'never could you bear to see me suffering; you were always tender-hearted. For my sake you left father and mother and bore the hardships of the forest, cold and heat and wind. Brother, where is now the love you bore me? Will you not rise at the sound of my mourning? Had I known that I should lose my brother in the forest, I should not have heeded my father's behest. Sons and riches, wives, houses and families come and go in the world continually; not so a true brother. Think on this, dear Laksman, and awake! As a bird is miserable without its wings, or a serpent without its jewel, or an elephant without its trunk, so will be my life apart from you, my brother, if brute fate preserve it. How can I face return to Avadh, having lost a dear brother for a woman's sake? The shame of her loss before the world I might have borne; to lose a wife is no great loss. But now my hard and pitiless heart will have to bear both that disgrace and grief for you, my son! You, dear one, were your mother's only son and the stay of her life. She took you by the hand and entrusted you to my care, thinking me one to bring you every joy, a perfect friend. What answer shall I give her now? Why do you not arise, brother, and give me counsel?'

Thus grieved with many a lament he who delivers all from grief. Tears streamed from his eyes like water from the leaves of a lotus. O Umā, Raghurāī, the one and indivisible, played a man's part in mercy to the faithful.

[D. 61.] When they heard the Lord's laments, the monkey hosts were sore disquieted. Then Hanumān arrived like an heroic theme in the midst of a dirge. [C. 62.] Joyfully Rāma greeted Hanumān; very grateful was the all-wise Lord. The physician at once applied his remedy and Laksman sat up, glad to be healed. The Lord clasped his brother to his heart and all the hosts of bears and monkeys rejoiced. Then the monkey carried the physician home as before he had brought him away.

When the Ten-headed heard what had happened, he beat his head again and again in the utmost despondency. Much disquieted, he went to see Kumbhakarṇa and only managed to awaken him with the greatest difficulty. The demon awoke looking like Death incarnate. 'Tell me, brother,' said Kumbhakarṇa, 'why is your face so pale?' The arrogant king told him the whole story and how he had carried off Sītā. 'Brother,' he said, 'the monkeys have slain all the demons and have massacred all our greatest warriors. Durmukha and man-eating Suraripu and those mighty champions Atikāya and Akampana, Mahodara too and many other heroes, staunch warriors all, have fallen on the field of battle.'

[D. 62.] When Kumbhakarṇa heard the Ten-headed's plaint, he was grieved and said, 'You fool, do you expect a prosperous issue after carrying off the Mother of the world? [C. 63.] You have done ill, O Demon King! And why have you come to waken me now? Even now, brother, swallow your pride and worship Rāma; then all will be well. Can Raghunāyak be no more than a man, Ten-headed, when one like Hanumān is his messenger? Alas, brother, you have acted very foolishly in not coming and telling me about this before. You have picked a quarrel, sire, with that deity whom Śiva, Brahmā and all the gods adore. I would have told you of the information that Nārada the sage imparted to me, but now it is too late. Now, brother, embrace me, for I go to see what most I long to see—the dark-hued lotus-eyed deliverer from all pain.'

[D. 63.] As he meditated on the beauty and virtue of Rāma, he remained for one moment abstracted; then he asked Rāvan for ten million jars of wine and a number of buffaloes. [C. 64.] When he had eaten the buffaloes and drunk the wine, he roared with a

voice of thunder. Then marched forth Kumbhakarṇa from his stronghold, maddened with drink and eager for the fray, and there was no army with him. When Vibhiṣan saw him, he ran forward, and falling at his feet declared his name. He raised his brother and clasped him to his heart and was pleased to learn that he was Raghupati's votary. 'Brother,' said Vibhiṣan, 'Rāvan kicked me when I was giving him salutary and thoughtful advice; in my vexation I came to Raghupati and the Lord was pleased to accept me as his humble servant.'

'Hearken, my son,' said Kumbhakarṇa; 'Rāvan's doom is sealed. How can he pay heed now to sound advice? Thrice blest are you, Vibhiṣan! You, my brother, have become the jewel of the demon race; you, my brother, have made our house for ever glorious in that you worship Rāma, the ocean of beauty and bliss! [D. 64.] Offer unfeigned worship, in thought and word and deed, to Rāma the valiant! But go now; I am a warrior doomed to death, nor can I any more know friend from foe.'

[C. 65.] When he heard what his brother said, Vibhiṣan departed and came to the jewel of the three spheres and said, 'Lord, the valiant Kumbhakarṇa approaches with a body huge as a mountain.' No sooner did the monkeys hear it than they rushed out in full strength, snapping and snarling, and picking up trees and mountains hurled them at him, gnashing their teeth in fury. The bears and monkeys launched the mountain-peaks upon him, millions and millions at a time; but neither did his courage fail nor did he give ground; he was like an elephant pelted with *āka* fruit. Then the Son of the Wind gave him a blow with his fist so that he fell to the ground and beat his head in agony; but he arose and struck Hanumān, who whirled round and fell to earth at once. Next, he dashed Nala and Nila to the ground and overthrew the warriors, hurling them down all around, one after another. The monkey army took to flight; panic-stricken, not one dared to face him. [D. 65.] Having rendered Aṅgad and the other monkeys unconscious, and Sugriva too, the demon of immeasurable might went off with the Monkey King held tight under his arm.

[C. 66.] O Umā, Raghupati was playing his part as a man, much as Garuḍ might make sport among a multitude of serpents. Can such a fight as this bring glory to him whose slightest frown brings Death to destruction? No, but by this means he will spread abroad his glory to purify the world, a glory that men will hymn and so pass across the ocean of birth and death.

When he regained consciousness, the Son of the Wind awoke and began to look for Sugrīva. Sugrīva also recovered from his swoon and slipped from under the demon's arm. Kumbhakarna thought he was dead, but he bit off his nose and ears and flew up into the sky with a roar. The demon saw him and caught him by the foot and dashed him to the ground; but he got up with the utmost speed and struck him again. Then the mighty monkey returned to his Lord, crying, 'Victory, victory, victory to the Lord of all grace!' When the demon realized that his nose and ears had been bitten off, he turned in wrath and vexation of spirit; and when the monkeys beheld him, terrible enough already and now with no nose or ears, a panic arose in their army. 'Victory, victory, victory to the jewel of the house of Raghu!' shouted the monkeys as they rushed forward with a war-cry and all at once let fly at him a volley of mountains and trees.

[C. 67.] Kumbhakarna came forward to oppose them, furious as Doom and eager for the fray. Myriads of monkeys he seized and swallowed like locusts that enter and fill a mountain cave. Myriads he caught and crushed against his body. Myriads he ground to powder and mingled with the dust of the earth. Hosts of bears and monkeys came out again through his mouth and nose and ears and fled. Drunk with battle fury, the demon was as arrogant as though God had offered him the universe and he would swallow it. The warriors turned to flee and nothing could check their flight; they could neither see nor hear for all their shouting. Thus Kumbhakarna utterly routed the monkey host and the demon army made onslaught when they heard it. Rāma saw that his forces were routed and that all manner of enemy squadrons had come up. [D. 67.] 'Hearken, Sugrīva, Vibhīṣan and my brother,' said the Lotus-eyed; 'rally the army. Let me test the might of this villain and his host!'

[C. 68.] With bow ready in hand and quiver at his side Raghunāth went forth to destroy the enemy's forces. And first the Lord twanged his bow and the host of the foe was deafened by the noise. Then Rāma, true to his promise, shot a hundred thousand arrows; they sped forth like winged serpents of death. On every side sped forth his volleys, and the frightful goblin warriors began to be cut to pieces. Their feet, their breasts, their heads and arms were severed and many warriors fell in a hundred pieces. Wounded, the champions whirled about and fell upon the ground, but rose again recovered to fight once more. At the stroke of the arrows

monkeys were attacking the four gates. On this side were the monkeys and the bears, heroes grim as death, and on the other the demons, very steadfast in the fray; and on both sides the warriors were fighting, intent on victory—a fight, Garur, that cannot be described.

[D. 72.] Meghanāda mounted his magic chariot and flew up into the sky with a mighty roar and a peal of laughter; the monkey host was terrified. [C. 73.] He hurled down lances and pikes, swords and scimitars, bolts and weapons of every description, axes and bludgeons and stones, followed by a shower of innumerable arrows. The ten quarters of the sky were as dark with arrows as when the clouds of Maghā<sup>1</sup> pour down torrential showers. Cries of ‘Seize them! Seize them! Kill them!’ were heard, but no one could perceive the assailant. Grasping mountains and trees, the monkeys rushed up into the sky, but still they could not see him and fell back dispirited. Inaccessible ravines, roads and mountain caves by the power of his magic he turned into cages for his arrows. ‘Where can we go?’ cried the monkeys in a panic. They were like mountains gaoled by Indra. He threw all the mighty heroes into confusion—Hanumān, Angad, Nala, Nīla and the rest. Next, he smote Laksman, Sugriva and Vibhīṣan and riddled them with arrows. Then he began to fight with Raghupati, and the arrows he shot became serpents as they struck him. Kharāri was entangled in the serpents’ coils, he, the free, the everlasting, one and immutable!

He who is ever independent, one, the Blessed Lord, exhibits like a showman all sorts of illusory feats. It was to enhance the glory of the battle that the Lord let himself be bound by the serpents’ coils; but the gods were frightened. [D. 73.] Can he, O Girijā, the omnipresent home of the universe, by the repetition of whose name sages sever the toils of birth and death, be brought into bondage? [C. 74.] It is idle to argue, Bhavāni, about the actions of Rāma as personal, whether by the power of reason or by speech; and that is why mystics and ascetics worship him without disputation.

Meghanāda confounded the army, then showed himself and poured out invective. ‘Villain!’ cried Jāmbavān. ‘Just stay where you are!’ At this the demon waxed all the more furious. ‘You fool,’ he cried, ‘it’s only because you’re in your dotage that

<sup>1</sup> The tenth of the *naksatras*, in the ascendant in the rainy month of Bhādon.

I've spared you so far; and now, base wretch, you've started to challenge me!' So saying, he launched at him his glittering trident, but Jāmbavān caught it in his hand and rushed to the attack. He struck Meghanāda in the chest so that the enemy of the gods spun round and fell to the ground. Then he caught him by the foot in an access of fury and whirled him round and dashed him to the earth. Thus did he exhibit his mighty strength. But by virtue of the divine gift the enemy could not be killed. Then the bear caught him by the foot and hurled him into Laṅkā.

Meanwhile, the divine seer had dispatched Garuṇa, who came to Rāma with all haste [D. 74a.] and seized and swallowed the whole swarm of magic serpents; and all the monkey troops rejoiced when the illusion was dispelled, [74b.] and armed with mountains, trees, stones and claws the monkeys rushed forth in fury; the demons fled in panic and climbed up to the top of the fort.

[C. 75.] When Meghanāda recovered from his swoon, he was much ashamed to look his father in the face. Forthwith he went off to a cave in a lofty mountain, purposing to perform a sacrifice that would ensure his triumph. But in Rāma's camp Vibhiṣan offered this considered advice: 'Hearken, Lord of matchless strength and chivalry; Meghanāda, that evil sorcerer and scourge of heaven, is performing an unholy sacrifice; and if, Lord, it be brought to a successful issue, then, sire, it will be difficult to overcome him.' Raghupati was very glad to hear it and said to Āṅgad and a number of other monkeys, 'Go you, my brothers all, with Laksman and spoil his sacrifice; and you, Laksman, slay him in battle, for it grieves me much to see the gods so frightened. Listen, brothers; so smite him with every device of strength and skill that the demon may be destroyed; and you three, Jāmbavān, Sugriva and Vibhiṣan, be ready with an army to support them.'

When Raghupati had issued his commands, the valiant Laksman girt his quiver on his thigh and strung his bow and, laying the power of the Lord upon his heart, he cried with a deep voice of thunder, 'If I return this day without having slain him, let me no more be called a servant of Raghupati! Though a hundred Śāmkaras should come to his aid, yet will I kill him in the name of Raghupati!' [D. 75.] Bowing his head before Raghupati's feet, Laksman at once marched forth, and with him were Āṅgad, Nila, Mayanda, Nala and gallant Hanumān.

[C. 76.] When the monkeys arrived, they saw that he was offering an oblation of blood and buffalo meat. The monkeys upset the

whole of his sacrifice; but when he remained undisturbed, they praised his resolution.<sup>1</sup> When even then he made no move, they caught him by the hair and kicked him again and again, and then ran away. He grasped his trident and rushed to the attack, but the monkeys fled and came to the spot where Lakṣman was waiting some way away.

On he came in a paroxysm of fury, striking and crying out again and again with a fearful roar. The Son of the Wind and Aṅgad rushed at him in wrath, but he smote them in the breast with his trident and laid them low. He let fly his terrible pike at the Lord, but Lakṣman struck it with an arrow and cleft it in twain. Hanumān and the Crown Prince got up once more and smote him furiously, but he was not wounded. The heroes withdrew, for nothing could kill the enemy. Then Meghanāda rushed forward with a terrible shriek. Lakṣman saw him coming on like raging Death, and shot keen arrows at him. When the villain saw the shafts come hurtling along like thunderbolts, he at once made himself invisible and began to fight in manifold disguises, sometimes showing himself and sometimes disappearing. When they saw that the foe was invincible, the monkeys were terrified. Then Lakṣman, the Serpent King, waxed very wroth. 'I've played long enough with this scoundrel,' he thought, and with firm resolve he dwelt on the mighty power of the lord of Kosala and fitted an arrow to his bow, and shooting it with all his might struck his foe full in the breast. At the moment of death he abandoned all deception, [D. 76.] and crying, 'Where is Lakṣman? Where is Rāma?' so expired. 'Blessed, blessed is she who bore you!' said Aṅgad and Hanumān.

[C. 77.] Hanumān lifted him up without an effort and after putting him down at the gate of Lānkā returned. When they heard of his death, the gods and the Gandharvas all mounted their chariots and gathered in the sky; they rained down flowers and beat their drums and sang the spotless glory of the Lord Raghunāth. 'Glory to Ananta! Glory to the world's support! Thou, Lord, hast delivered all the gods!' Thus did the gods and adepts sing his praises and depart, and Lakṣman returned to the Lord of grace.

When the Ten-headed heard that his son had been slain, he fell unconscious to the ground. Mandodarī beat her breast and with

<sup>1</sup> Or 'praised him sarcastically'; or 'praised his courage, trying to incite him to fight'.

loud cries made grievous lamentation, while all the people of the city were wild with grief, each one upbraiding the Ten-headed.

[D. 77.] Rāvan did all he could to console his wives, saying, 'See and consider that the whole of this world is but a passing show'.

[C. 78.] It was wise advice that Rāvan gave them; he himself was evil, but his counsel was good and wholesome. Many are skilled in giving good advice, but few are those who follow it themselves.

The night was spent and day dawned, and the bears and the monkeys again beleaguered the four gates. The Ten-headed summoned his warriors and said, 'If anyone is like to waver in face of the enemy, it were better he should flee at once; to flee from the combat is but to incur disgrace. Relying on the strength of my own arms, I have prolonged the contest and am ready to give my answer to any foe who attacks me.' So saying, he made ready his chariot, swift as the wind, and all the martial instruments began to play. Forth marched all the heroes of unchallenged might, sweeping along like a storm of soot. At that hour innumerable omens of ill were seen, but he recked naught of them, relying in overweening arrogance on the strength of his arms.

[Ch. 4.] In his overweening pride he recked naught of omens, good or ill. Weapons dropped from warriors' hands and they themselves fell from their chariots; horses neighed and elephants trumpeted as they broke their ranks and fled; jackals and vultures and dogs in great numbers shrieked and howled, and owls hooted weirdly like harbingers of doom.

[D. 78.] Can he who is bent on harming the world, infatuate, an enemy of Rāma and the slave of lust, even dream of enjoying prosperity, fair omens or peace of mind?

[C. 79.] The huge demon army marched forth, companies of foot and horse, elephants and chariots, rank after rank; all kinds of vehicles there were, chariots and cars, with flags and banners of manifold hues. Wild elephants came forth in countless herds, like clouds driven by the wind in the season of rain, and squadrons of armed heroes of every colour, brave in battle and skilled in many a magic trick. Very marvellous and splendid were their troops, as though Spring the warrior had equipped an army. As the host marched forth, the elephants of the quarters staggered, ocean was stirred and the mountains reeled. Dust rose and the sun was hidden, the wind sank weary and earth was troubled. Drums and other instruments made loud music, like thunder from

the clouds on the day of dissolution. Bugles, trumpets and hautboys sounded the martial strain that gladdens the hero. The warriors were all roaring like lions, each extolling his own strength and courage. 'Hearken, men of valour!' cried the Ten-headed. 'Crush all the hosts of bears and monkeys! I myself will slay the two brother princes!' So saying, he brought his army forward.

When the monkeys heard these tidings, they all rushed on, calling on the name of Raghubir. [Ch. 5.] Like Doom the monkeys and bears rushed on, huge and fearful as though all manner of winged mountains were in flight. With claws and teeth for weapons and armed with hills and lofty trees, they feared naught in their might. Shouting victory to Rāma, a lion to vanquish the savage elephant Rāvan, they proclaimed his glorious renown. [D. 79.] On both sides rose the cry of triumph. Each champion chose his match and closed. These cried, 'Rāma!' and those 'Rāvan!'

[C. 80.] Seeing that Rāvan was mounted on a chariot and Raghubir on foot, Vibhiṣan was apprehensive, rendered anxious by his great devotion; he did obeisance to Rāma's feet and said affectionately, 'Lord, you have no chariot, nor anything to protect your body, nor shoes on your feet. How will you overcome this stalwart hero?'

'Hearken, my friend,' said the Lord of grace; 'the victor needs another kind of chariot. Heroism and courage are the wheels of that chariot; truth and virtuous conduct its firm-set flags and pennants; strength, discretion, self-control, and unselfish action are its horses, harnessed with compassion, kindness and impartial judgement. The worship of God is its skilful charioteer, detachment his shield and contentment his scimitar; almsgiving is his axe and understanding his keen lance and the highest wisdom his unyielding bow. His quiver is a soul stainless and unmoved, filled with the arrows of restraint, control and pious observance. Worship of Brāhmans and the *guru* is his impenetrable buckler. There is no other way to win victory than this. There is no foe, my friend, can conquer him who rides upon this chariot of righteousness. [D. 80a.] Believe me, my resolute friend; he who possesses so strong a chariot as this is a champion who can vanquish so mighty and invincible a foe as birth and death.'

[80b.] Vibhiṣan rejoiced to hear the words of his Lord and clasped his lotus feet and cried, 'You have taken this occasion to teach me a wise lesson, O Rāma, sum of all grace and bliss!'

[80c.] On the one side the Ten-headed was shouting defiance, and on the other Aṅgad and Hanumān. The demons were fighting with the bears and the monkeys, each host in sworn allegiance to its own lord.

[C. 81.] Mounted on their cars, Brahmā and all the gods and adepts and sages watched the battle from the sky. I too, Umā, was there with them, beholding Rāma's exploits on the battlefield. The warriors on both sides were drunk with the lust of battle; the monkeys were triumphant, relying on Rāma's might. They closed with one another with shouts of defiance, crushing the foe and hurling him to the ground. They struck, they bit, they seized, they overthrew; they smashed their skulls and used them as bludgeons; they tore out their stomachs and pulled off their arms, they caught the warriors by the foot and dashed them to the ground. The bears buried the fighting demons in the earth and piled upon them heaps of dust. The valorous monkeys, as they struggled with the foe, looked like so many raging Deaths.

[Ch. 6.] The monkeys looked like raging Deaths, with their bodies streaming with blood. Their mighty warriors crushed the demon host and roared like thunder-clouds. They beat them and cuffed them and threatened them; they bit them with their teeth and trod them underfoot. Monkeys and bears howled at the villainous foe, striving to crush their power by force or stratagem. They clutched their cheeks and tore them open, they rent their breasts asunder and hung their entrails round their necks, as though the lord of Prahlāda<sup>1</sup> had multiplied himself and were sporting on the field of battle. Heaven and earth resounded with fearsome cries: 'Seize! Kill! Bite! Dash down!' Victory to Rāma, who indeed can make a blade of grass strong as a thunderbolt and a thunderbolt weak as grass!

[D. 81.] When he saw his army wavering, the Ten-headed mounted his chariot, and taking ten bows in his twenty hands cried commandingly, 'Rally! Rally!'

[C. 82.] In fearful wrath the Ten-headed rushed on and the monkeys shouted war-cries as they came forth to meet him. Seizing trees and stones and mountains in their hands they hurled them at him all at once. But as soon as they struck his body, hard as a thunderbolt, the crags immediately broke into pieces, and Rāvan gave no ground, but stayed his chariot motionless, drunk with battle fury and exceeding wroth.

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Narasimha. See App., s.v. Viṣṇu.

Then springing and bounding on this side and on that, he began to crush the monkey warriors in his rage, and numbers of bears and monkeys took to flight, crying, ‘Save us, save us, Aṅgad, Hanumān! Protect us, protect us, Raghubīr our master! This villain is devouring us like Death himself!’

When Rāvan saw that all the monkeys had fled, he fitted arrows to all his ten bows. [Ch. 7.] Fitting arrows to his bows, he shot them all forth, and they flew on and struck them like serpents. Heaven and earth and all the quarters of the sky were full of arrows; whither could the monkeys flee? There was a fearful uproar, the host of bears and monkeys crying in piteous dismay, ‘O Raghubīr, Lord of compassion! Friend of the wretched! O Hari, saviour of the faithful! ’

[D. 82.] When Laksman saw that his army was confounded, he girt his quiver on his thigh and with bow in hand bowed his head before Rāma’s feet and marched forth in a fury. [C. 83.] ‘You scoundrel! ’ he cried. ‘You’re killing monkeys and bears, are you? But look at me! I am your doom! ’ ‘I was looking for you,’ replied Rāvan; ‘you murderer of my son, this day I shall console myself by putting you to death! ’ So saying, he let fly a volley of keen arrows, but Laksman cleft them all into a hundred pieces. Myriads of weapons Rāvan hurled at him, but he cut them in two and warded them off as though they were sesamum seeds. Then he attacked him with his own arrows, shattered his chariot and slew his charioteer; into each of his ten heads he drove a hundred shafts, which pierced them like serpents transfixing mountain-peaks. Next, he smote his breast with a hundred arrows so that he fell to the ground insensible. But he recovered from his swoon and got up with strength renewed and launched at Laksman the spear that Brahmā had given him.

[Ch. 8.] The sharp spear that Brahmā had given him struck Laksman full in the breast, and the hero fell helpless. The Ten-headed tried to lift him up but could not for all the might of his unequalled strength. Rāvan, the fool, thought to lift up him on whose one head rests the whole universe like a grain of dust; he knew him not to be Lord of the three worlds.

[D. 83.] When the Son of the Wind saw it, he ran forward with insults and abuse; but as the monkey came on, the demon dealt him a violent blow with his fist. [C. 84.] The monkey dropped to his knee but fell not to the ground; he recovered himself and got up full of wrath. He struck Rāvan one blow with his fist and he

fell like a mountain smitten by a thunderbolt. Recovering from his swoon, he regained consciousness and began to extol the monkey's marvellous strength; but Hanumān cried, 'A curse, a curse on my manhood! A curse on myself, for that you, O enemy of the gods, yet remain alive!' So saying, the monkey brought Lakṣman away and the Ten-headed was astonished to see it. 'My brother,' said Raghbir, 'remember that you are the devourer of Death and the saviour of the gods!' At these words the gracious Lord sat up, and that sharp spear flew up to heaven. Once more he grasped his bow and arrows and rushed forward, in great haste to face the foe.

[Ch. 9.] Again he speedily shattered his chariot, slew his charioteer and put him to confusion. He pierced his heart with a hundred arrows so that the Ten-headed fell fainting to the ground. Another charioteer threw him on to his chariot and brought him swiftly to Laṅkā, while Raghbir's all-glorious brother once more bowed before the feet of the Lord.

[D. 84.] Meanwhile, the Ten-headed recovered consciousness and began to perform a sacrifice. In his stubborn and utter ignorance the fool was expecting to triumph in a quarrel with Rāma!

[C. 85.] In Rāma's camp Vibhiṣan, on learning the news, hastened to Raghupati and told him. 'Lord,' he said, 'Rāvan is performing a sacrifice, and if it succeed, the wretch will never perish. Send, Lord, immediately monkey warriors to upset his sacrifice, so that the Ten-headed may return to fight.'

At early dawn the Lord dispatched his warriors, Hanumān, Angad and other monkeys, who ran and bounded up into Laṅkā as in sport and entered Rāvan's palace undaunted; and as soon as they saw him engaged in sacrifice, all the monkeys were furiously angry and cried, 'So you've run away home from the battle like a shameless coward and are practising here hypocritical contemplation!', and with that Angad gave him a kick; but the fool did not even cast a glance at them, so occupied was he with his own purpose.

[Ch. 10.] When he would not look at them, the monkeys in a rage bit him and kicked him. They seized his wives by the hair and dragged them out of the palace screaming with pain. Then at last he rose in his wrath like Death and grasping the monkeys by their feet cast them away; but in the meantime the monkeys had upset the sacrifice, and when he saw it, he was in despair.

[D. 85.] Having thus disturbed the sacrifice, the clever monkeys

returned to Raghupati, and the demon departed in wrath, despairing of his life.

[C. 86.] As he went, ghastly omens of ill occurred; vultures flew and settled on his heads. But he was doomed to death and heeded no omen. 'Strike up martial music!' he cried, and out marched the army of innumerable demons—troops of elephants, chariots, horse and foot. The villains rushed on to meet the Lord like swarms of moths flying into a flame. Meanwhile, the gods sang Rāma's praise and said, 'This demon has sorely troubled us; now, Rāma, make sport with him no longer, for the princess of Videha is in great distress'. The Lord smiled when he heard the gods' entreaty. Then Raghubir arose and made ready his arrows; he bound his knotted tresses firmly on his head, glorious with blossoms intertwined; dawn-bright were his eyes and his body dark as the rain-burdened cloud, gladdening the sight of all in every sphere. He girt his belt and quiver on his loins and took in his hand the strong Sārṅga bow.<sup>1</sup>

[Ch. 11.] He took Sārṅga in his hand and girt upon his thigh his beautiful quiver, full of arrows; lusty were his arms and his breast broad and comely, gleaming with the print of the Brāhmaṇa's foot.<sup>2</sup> When the Lord began to twirl his bow and arrows in his hand, the universe, the elephants of the quarters, the tortoise, the serpent, the earth and seas and mountains reeled. [D. 86.] Beholding his beauty, the gods rejoiced and rained down countless flowers, crying, 'Victory, victory, victory to the Lord of mercy in whom abide all beauty, strength and excellence!'

[C. 87.] Meanwhile, the demon troops came jostling on in crowds, and when they saw them, the valiant monkeys marched out to face them as dense clouds gather on the day of dissolution. Many a scimitar and sword flashed forth as lightning gleams in the quarters of the heavens. The harsh din of elephants, chariots and horses was like the awful peal of thunder-clouds. The monkeys' many tails spread over the sky as though beautiful rainbows had appeared. Dust rose like a stream and arrows flew like drops of pelting rain. Both sides hurled mountains that fell in ceaseless showers like thunderbolts. Raghupati in his wrath shot streams of arrows by which the demon hosts were wounded. As the arrows struck, the warriors fell here and there on the ground, shrieking and whirling

<sup>1</sup> The bow of Visnu.

<sup>2</sup> See App., s.v. Bhṛigu.

about. Rivers of blood flowed forth like torrents down a hill, striking terror into coward hearts.

[Ch. 12.] A terror to the cowards were the rivers of blood that flooded forth in impure streams and flowed on horribly. The two armies were the river banks, the chariots the sand, their wheels the eddies; elephants, footmen, horses and asses and all kinds of vehicles that none could count, the fish; arrows, lances and clubs were serpents, bows were the waves and shields the countless tortoises, [D. 87.] Warriors fell like trees upon the banks; the marrow of their bones oozed out in quantities like foam. Cowards trembled at the sight; the brave were glad.

[C. 88.] Ghosts, goblins and vampires bathed in the stream, and dreadful fiends with masses of tangled hair; crows and kites flew off with arms, seized them from one another and devoured them. Some cried, 'You fools! Haven't you got enough already with such abundance?' Wounded warriors fell on the bank and groaned as though they were lying strewn about half in the water.<sup>1</sup> Vultures pulled out entrails as if they were earnestly angling for fish on the bank of a river. Numbers of warriors floated down the stream, and birds alighted on them as if they were sporting on river boats. Witches collected skulls and filled them; the wives of ghosts and goblins danced in the sky, while grim goddesses<sup>2</sup> clashed heroes' skulls as castanets and sang all kinds of songs. Herds of jackals snapped and chattered; they ate, they howled, they stuffed themselves full and threatened one another. Myriads of headless trunks were on the move, and heads lay on the ground and shouted, 'Victory! Victory!'

[Ch. 13.] Heads cried, 'Victory!' and dreadful headless trunks ran all about. Birds struggled and squabbled among the skulls and warriors overthrew warriors. Proud in Rāma's strong support, monkeys were trampling down the demon hosts; brave heroes, smitten by the cloud of Rāma's arrows, were sleeping on the field of battle.

[D. 88.] Rāvan thought to himself, 'The demons have been slain and I remain alone, while the monkeys and the bears are many; I must employ my boundless magic power.'

<sup>1</sup> Like dying men brought to the bank of a sacred river.

<sup>2</sup> Cāmupḍā: a horrible black goddess, sent forth from Durgā's forehead to slay the demons Caṇḍa and Munda. She is described as wearing a garland of corpses, with gaping mouth and lolling tongue, filling the worlds with her shouts.

[C. 89.] When the gods saw that the Lord was on foot, they were seriously disquieted. The king of heaven at once sent his own chariot, and Mātali gladly brought it, a splendid chariot, celestial, incomparable, which the king of the city of Kosala was delighted to mount. Four horses it had, mettlesome, handsome and swift as thought; they grew not old nor could they die. Seeing Raghunāth mounted on this chariot, the monkeys rushed forward with renewed vigour; their onslaught was irresistible. Then Rāvan shed his magic power abroad. Raghubir penetrated his illusions, but Lakṣman and the monkeys mistook them for reality. The monkeys beheld in the demon ranks a multitude of Lakṣmans and kings of Kosala; [Ch. 14.] and when they saw the multitude of Rāmas and Lakṣmans, the monkeys and the bears were terrified, and they and Lakṣman stood looking about, like painted pictures, rooted to the spot. The lord of Kosala smiled when he saw his army thus bewildered and, making ready his bow and arrows, Hari dissipated the illusion in the twinkling of an eye, and all the monkey host rejoiced.

[D. 89.] Then Rāma looked upon them all and cried in solemn tones, 'Watch now our duel, for you, my valiant allies, are all worn out!' [C. 90.] So saying, Raghunāth bowed his head before the Brāhmans' lotus feet and drove his chariot on. Then was the king of Lankā exceeding wroth and rushed out to meet him with roars of defiance. 'Hearken, ascetic,' he cried; 'I am not such as those warriors whom you have vanquished on the field! Rāvan is my name; my fame is noised throughout the world! The guardians of the spheres lie bound in my dungeons! Khara, Dūṣana and Virādha have you slain; poor Bāli you killed like a huntsman; troops of demon warriors have you overthrown; Kuṇbhakarṇa and Meghanāda have you murdered; today if you flee not from the battlefield, O king, I shall avenge them all! Today I shall assuredly consign you to your doom! It is unyielding Rāvan with whom you have to deal!'

When he heard these execrations and knew the demon's doom was sealed, the gracious Lord answered with a smile, 'Yes, all you say about your mighty power is true; but cease to brag and prove your courage by your acts. [Ch. 15.] Cast not a stain on your fair fame by bragging. Now listen to this lesson patiently: there are in the world three kinds of men; one, like the trumpet-flower, bears only blossom; a second, like the mango, bears both flower and fruit; a third, like the bread-fruit tree, only fruit. One talks,

the second talks and acts, the third acts only without talking.' [D. 90.] Rāvan laughed at Rāma's parable and said, 'So now you're teaching me philosophy, are you? You were brave enough to quarrel with me a little while ago, but now you're beginning to value your life!'

[C. 91.] With furious insults the Ten-headed began to shoot arrows like thunderbolts. Arrows of all shapes came hurtling forth till every quarter of heaven and earth was dark with them. But Raghubir sent forth an arrow of fire and in a moment the demon's shafts were consumed. Gnashing his teeth with rage the demon hurled his pointed lance, but the Lord cast it back again with an arrow. Myriads of discs and tridents he launched, but the Lord without an effort cleft them and turned them aside. Rāvan's arrows were as ineffectual as are always the ambitions of wicked hearts. Then he smote Rāvan's charioteer with a hundred arrows and he fell to the ground, crying, 'Victory to Rāma!' So Rāma in his mercy raised the charioteer again.

[Ch. 16.] But then the Lord was seized with overwhelming fury. Furious was Raghubati in the fight against the foe; his arrows fidgeted in the quiver. At the fearful twanging of his bow the man-eating monsters fell back in dismay. Mandodari trembled; the sea, the tortoise, earth and the hills were afraid; the elephants of the quarters clutched earth with their jaws and trumpeted. The gods laughed to see the sport. [D. 91.] He drew his bowstring to his ear and shot forth his keen arrows; forth flew a volley of Rāma's shafts, quivering like serpents.

[C. 92.] The shafts flew forth like winged serpents, and first of all they slew the charioteer and the horses; they shattered the chariot and struck down the banners and the flags. Rāvan roared, but inwardly his strength failed him. At once he mounted another chariot, gnashing his teeth in fury. All manner of weapons he let fly, but all his efforts were unavailing, like the thoughts of a man who delights in harming others. Then Rāvan hurled ten pikes; he struck the four horses and felled them to the ground; but Raghnāyak in a rage raised up his horses; he drew his bow and sent forth his arrows. Raghubir's arrows flew at Rāvan's heads in swarms, like bees that haunt a lotus bed. Ten arrows struck each head; they pierced them through and through and streams of blood came flowing out. On rushed the mighty demon with blood streaming down. Again the Lord fitted an arrow to his bow; thirty arrows Raghubir shot and struck his heads and arms to the

ground; but as soon as ever he cut them off, they grew afresh. Then once more Rāma robbed him of his arms and heads; many times did the Lord destroy his arms and heads, but when they were severed, at once new ones sprang up again. Again and yet again the Lord cut off his arms and heads. Very sportive is the Lord of Kosala ! The demon's arms and heads covered the heavens, like Ketus and Rāhus without number.

[Ch. 17.] Like many a Rāhu and Ketu they rushed along the path of the sky while blood streamed down, and Raghubir's dread arrows so struck them that they could not fall to earth. Each pierced by an arrow, the throng of heads flew through the sky, looking as though the rays of a wrathful sun had everywhere threaded Rāhus on a string. [D. 92.] As often as the Lord shore off his heads, so often they sprang up innumerable, as new lusts ever grow space when a man serves sensual ends.

[C. 93.] When the Ten-headed saw his heads thus multiplied, he paid no heed to death but waxed fiercely wroth. The arrogant fool rushed on with a roar and drew his ten bows. On the field of battle the Ten-headed raged; he let fly a shower of arrows that so covered Raghupati's chariot that for a moment it disappeared from sight like the sun hidden in a mist. When the gods cried out in alarm, the Lord angrily grasped his bow, warded off the arrows and cut off his enemy's heads; they covered every quarter of earth and sky. The severed heads rushed along the path of the heavens, causing affright with cries of 'Victory! Victory! Where are Lakṣman and Sugriva, the Monkey King ? Where is Raghubir, the king of Kosala ?'

[Ch. 18.] 'Where is Rāma?' cried the throng of heads as they rushed about. The monkeys saw them and fled. Making ready his bow, the jewel of the house of Raghu laughed and with his arrows well and truly pierced the heads. It was as though countless troops of Kālis were assembled with garlands of heads in their hands, who had bathed in a river of blood and were going to worship at the banyan of war.

[D. 93.] Again the Ten-headed in a fury hurled forth his dreadful spear; it flew straight at Vibhiṣan like the bludgeon of Death.

[C. 94.] When he saw the fearful spear approaching, Rāma, remembering that he had sworn to deliver his suppliants from all their troubles, at once set Vibhiṣan behind him and himself stood forward to take the shock of the weapon. The spear struck him and he seemed to swoon; the Lord was feigning weakness but the

gods were alarmed. When Vibhiṣan saw that the Lord was fainting, he seized his club and rushed out in a rage, crying, 'You wretch! You fool! Insensate scoundrel! You have taken up arms against gods and men and sages and serpents! And just because you reverently offered your heads to Śiva, you've got millions of heads in exchange for every one! That's why you've escaped so far, you villain, but now death is at your door. You fool, do you expect to prosper in a quarrel with Rāma?' So saying, he struck him full in the breast with his club.

[Ch. 19.] Smitten on the breast by the hard dread stroke of the club, he fell to the ground with his ten heads streaming with blood; then recovering, he ran furiously to the attack. The two mighty combatants closed and wrestled, each striking the other; proud in the strength of Raghubir, Vibhiṣan cared not one whit for his enemy.

[D. 94.] O Umā, how could Vibhiṣan ever dare to challenge Rāvan face to face? It was in the power of the Lord Raghubir that now he fought with him like Death himself.

[C. 95.] When Hanumān saw that Vibhiṣan was utterly exhausted, he rushed forward with a mountain in his hand. He overthrew the chariot with its horses and its charioteer and kicked Rāvan on the chest. The demon stood his ground but trembled all over. Vibhiṣan returned to the saviour of his servants. Then Rāvan struck the monkey with a shout of defiance, and the monkey spread his tail and ascended to the sky. Rāvan grasped his tail, but the monkey flew on, carrying him with him. Then the mighty Hanumān turned and grappled with him; there in the sky they fought, warriors equally matched, smiting each other in fury. As they employed all their force and wiles in the upper air, it looked as though Sumeru were clashing with a mountain of soot. When the demon would not be cast down either by force or stratagem, the Son of the Wind thought on his Lord. [Ch. 20.] Fixing his thoughts on the Lord Raghubir, the resolute monkey shouted defiance and smote Rāvan. He fell to the ground, got up again and fought, and the gods cried, 'Victory! Victory!' to both. Seeing that Hanumān was in difficulties, the monkeys and bears came furiously on; but Rāvan, drunk with the lust of conflict, crushed all their warriors with the might of his formidable arms.

[D. 95.] Then, incited by Raghubir, the monkeys rushed dauntlessly on, and when he saw their overwhelming force, the demon put forth his magic power. [C. 96.] For a moment the villain

made himself invisible, then appeared again in a multitude of forms; on all sides were manifest as many Rāvans as there were bears and monkeys in Raghupati's army. The monkeys saw an infinite number of Rāvans, and they and the bears fled in all directions. Their courage failed, and as they fled, they cried, 'Save us, O save us, Laksman and Raghubir!' Myriads of Rāvans were rushing about in every quarter of the earth, roaring aloud with harsh and awesome cries. All the gods were frightened and took to flight, crying, 'Now, brother, give up all hope of victory! One Ten-headed was enough to conquer all the gods, and now there are many! Make for the mountain caves!' Only Brahmā, Śambhu and as many wise sages as knew something of the greatness of the Lord stayed where they were.

[Ch. 21.] Those who knew his mighty power stood fast and unafraid, but the monkeys thought that all those enemies were real, and they and the bears all fled in confusion, crying in their panic, 'Protect us, Lord of grace!' But Hanumān, Angad, Nila and Nala, valorous warriors, fought on with all their might and crushed myriads and myriads of Rāvans, the illusory growth of warrior demon kings.

[D. 96.] The king of Kosala smiled when he saw the gods and the monkeys confounded, and stringing Sāringa, slew with a single arrow all the phantom ten-headed kings. [C. 97.] In an instant the Lord dispelled the whole illusion as darkness is dispersed at the rising of the sun, and when they saw one single Rāvan, the gods rejoiced. They turned back again and showered abundant blossoms on the Lord. With arms upraised Raghupati rallied the monkeys, who then turned back, shouting to one another. In the strength of their Lord the bears and monkeys rushed on and with vigorous bounds returned to the field of battle. Seeing that the gods were singing Rāma's praises, Rāvan thought, 'Now they think that I am only one; but be that as it may, you fools, you never cease to be my prey!' So saying, he rushed in a fury up to the heavens, and the gods fled with a cry of despair. 'Villains,' cried Rāvan, 'whither would you go to escape me?'

When Angad saw the gods fleeing in confusion, he rushed out, sprang up, caught Rāvan by the foot and hurled him to earth. [Ch. 22.] The son of Bāli seized him, hurled him to earth and kicked him, and then returned to the Lord. The Ten-headed recovered and arose and roared with a dread harsh voice. Haughtily he strung his ten bows, and fitting arrows to their strings

shot them forth in a shower. He wounded all the warriors and terrified them and rejoiced to see his own might.

[D. 97.] Then Raghupati cut off Rāvan's heads and arms, bows and arrows and all, but they sprang up again and increased, like sins committed at a sacred place. [C. 98.] The bears and monkeys were infuriated when they saw their enemy's heads and arms growing again, and rushed boldly and wrathfully to the attack, crying, 'The fool will not die though his arms and heads be severed!' Aṅgad, Hanumān, Nala and Nila, the Monkey King and Dvivida, mighty warriors all, attacked him with trees and mountains, but he seized the mountains and trees and smote them with them. Some few ripped up the enemy's body with their claws and ran away, and some dealt him kicks. Then Nala and Nila leapt on to his heads and tore his foreheads with their claws. The sight of his blood sore vexed him, and he stretched up his arms to catch them, but they would not come within reach and kept moving above his hands like two bees hovering over a lotus bed. At last with a furious bound he clutched them both, but just as he was dashing them to the ground they twisted his arms and escaped. Exasperated, he once more took up his ten bows and wounded the monkeys with the strokes of his arrows.

Having thus rendered Hanumān and the other monkeys insensible, and seeing that evening was falling, the Ten-headed rejoiced; but when the valiant Jāmbavān saw that all the monkey heroes were unconscious, he rushed forward, and he and the bears with him, armed with mountains and trees, began to attack with repeated cries of defiance. The mighty Rāvan waxed wroth, and seizing a number of warriors by the foot dashed them to the ground. The king of the bears was furious when he saw his troops thus massacred, and kicked Rāvan on the breast.

[Ch. 23.] Smitten by this violent blow upon the breast, he fell senseless from his chariot to the ground, clutching bears in his twenty hands like bees hiding in lotuses by night. Seeing him unconscious, the king of the bears gave him one more kick and returned to the Lord. Perceiving it was night, the charioteer threw Rāvan on to his chariot and did all he could to revive him. [D. 98.] The bears and monkeys all recovered from their swoon and returned to the Lord, while all the demons surrounded Rāvan in the utmost consternation.

[C. 99.] On that same night Trijatā went to Sītā and told her all that had happened. When she heard how the enemy's heads

and arms had multiplied, Sītā was sore afraid; she looked despondent and felt very anxious. ‘What is going to happen?’ she said to Trijatā. ‘Why don’t you tell me, mother? How can this torturer of the universe be put to death? Even though his heads be severed by Raghupati’s arrows, he does not perish! God is ever working against me! It is my ill fortune that keeps him alive—the fate that parted me from Hari’s lotus feet! And that same fate that misled me by fashioning the false golden deer is still with me! That fate which has brought upon me these intolerable woes and caused me to utter reproaches to Laksman and has smitten me over and over again and smites me still with the grievous poisoned shafts of Raghupati’s loss, and even in such agony allows me not to die, keeps him alive—that and no other!’ Many a lamentation did Jānaki utter as she constantly remembered the Lord of grace.

‘Hearken, princess,’ said Trijatā; ‘if an arrow pierce his heart, the enemy of heaven will die; but the Lord strikes not his heart because the princess of Videha dwells therein. [Ch. 24.] He thinks, “In his heart dwells Jānaki and in Jānaki’s heart is my home; and in my heart are countless worlds; the stroke of an arrow would mean universal destruction”.’ Hearing this, Sītā’s soul was divided between joy and grief; and when she saw it, Trijatā spoke again: ‘Now this is how the enemy will be slain; hearken, fair lady, and doubt no more the issue. [D. 99.] The severing of his heads will so disturb him that the thought of you will escape him, and then the all-wise Rāma will strike Rāvan to the heart.’

[C. 100.] With these and many such words Trijatā consoled her and then returned to her own home. But the princess of Videha, thinking on Rāma’s loving nature, felt once more the agony of separation. With many reproaches she upbraided the night and the moon: ‘The night is never-ending; it passes like an age!’ Sadly mourned Jānaki in silent grief for the loss of Rāma; but when she was tortured by the anguish of bereavement, her left eye and arm began to throb; and, recognizing this as a good omen, she took courage and was assured that she would see the gracious Raghubir once again.

Meanwhile, Rāvan awoke from his swoon at midnight and began to be angry with his charioteer: ‘Fool to have carried me away from the battlefield! Curses, curses on you, you stupid brute!’ The charioteer clasped his feet and endeavoured to pacify him, and Rāvan again mounted his chariot at daybreak and hastened to the

fray. There was wild confusion in the monkey ranks when they heard the Ten-headed was coming. The mighty warriors rushed about, gnashing their teeth and rooting up mountains and trees wherever they could find them.

[Ch. 25.] The huge monkeys and formidable bears rushed on carrying mountains in their hands. They attacked with the utmost fury and the demons fled before their onslaught. Having routed the army, the mighty monkeys then surrounded Rāvan, and buffeting him on every side and tearing his body with their claws utterly confounded him.

[D. 100.] When he saw the overwhelming strength of the monkeys, Rāvan took thought, and becoming invisible in a moment shed abroad an illusion. [Ch. 26.] When he exercised his magic power, awful beings came into view, vampires, ghosts and goblins with bows and arrows in their hands; witches, grasping swords in one hand and in the other human skulls, drank draughts of fresh blood as they danced and sang their many songs. 'Seize and kill!' they shrieked, and their cries re-echoed all around; with open mouths they rushed on to devour and the monkeys took to flight. Whithersoever the monkeys fled, they saw fire blazing, and they and the bears were at a loss; and next, there fell on them a shower of sand. Having thus on all sides robbed the monkeys of their courage, Rāvan roared again, and all the brave monkeys, with Lakṣman and their king, lost consciousness. 'Alas, O Rāma! O Raghu-nāth, alas!' cried the warriors and wrung their hands. Having thus broken down all their strength, Rāvan created a new phantasm. He made appear a number of Hanumāns, who rushed forward with rocks in their hands and surrounded Rāma in a dense throng on every side. They gnashed their teeth and raised their tails aloft and cried, 'Kill him! Seize him! Don't let him go!' Their tails encircled him, and in their midst stood the king of Kosala.

[Ch. 27.] In their midst the beauteous, dark-hued body of the king of Kosala shone glorious as a lofty *tamāla* fenced in by countless gleaming rainbows. The gods looked on the Lord with mingled feelings of pleasure and pain, uttering cries of 'Victory! Victory! Victory!' Raghubīr angrily dispelled the illusion with one arrow in the twinkling of an eye. The monkeys and the bears were delighted at the disappearance of the phantoms, and all grasped trees and hills and returned to the assault. Rāma let fly a volley of arrows and Rāvan's arms and heads once more fell to the ground. Though a hundred Śeśas, Śāradās, Vedas and poets

should hymn the warlike exploits of the Lord Rāma and Rāvan through countless aeons, yet could they never tell them all.

[D. 101a.] (Dull-witted Tulasi Dās has told something of the marvel of their feats, much as a fly does its best to mount on wings to the sky.)

[101b.] Though his heads and arms were severed time and again, the warrior king of Laṅkā did not die. The Lord was making sport, but gods, adepts and sages were dismayed at the sight of his suffering.

[C. 101.] No sooner were the demon's heads severed than multitudes sprang up anew, as avarice increases with every gain. In spite of all endeavour the enemy would not die. Then Rāma looked towards Vibhiṣan; that Lord, O Umā, in obedience to whose will Death himself would die, tested the devotion of his servant. 'Hearken,' said Vibhiṣan, 'O omniscient Lord of all creation, protector of the suppliant, delight of gods and sages! In the hollow of Rāvan's navel there lies a pool of nectar, and by its virtue, Lord, his life is preserved.' When he heard what Vibhiṣan said, the gracious Lord was glad and grasped his dreadful arrows. Then appeared all manner of evil omens; numbers of asses, jackals and dogs began to howl; birds cried, predicting universal woe, and comets were seen all over the sky. Blazing fires broke out in every quarter, and though there was no new moon, the sun was eclipsed. Mandodari's heart beat fast and images shed tears from their eyes.

[Ch. 28.] Images wept, thunderbolts fell from heaven, a violent wind sprang up, earth reeled, clouds rained down blood and hair and dust—who can describe all the inauspicious omens? Beholding these innumerable portents, the gods in heaven cried anxiously for victory; and perceiving that the gods were terrified, the gracious Raghubir fitted arrows to his bow. [D. 102.] He'drew the string to his ear and shot forth thirty-one arrows. Raghunāyak's arrows sped forth like great serpents of doom.

[C. 102.] One arrow dried up the depths of Rāvan's navel; the others furiously smote his heads and arms and carried them away with them. The headless, armless trunk danced upon the ground. The earth sank down, but the trunk rushed violently on. Then the Lord struck it with an arrow and cut it in two. Even as he died, he roared aloud with a great and terrible yell, 'Where is Rāma, that I may challenge him and slay him in combat?' Earth

shook as the Ten-headed fell; the sea, the rivers, the mountains and the elephants of the quarters were troubled. Spreading abroad the two halves of his body, he fell to the ground, crushing beneath him crowds of bears and monkeys. The arrows laid the arms and the heads before Mandodari and returned to the Lord of the world; they all came back and entered his quiver. The gods saw it and beat their drums. His spirit entered the Lord's mouth; Śambhu and Brahmā saw it and were glad. The universe was filled with cries of triumph: 'Victory to Raghubir, mighty of arm!' Companies of gods and sages rained down flowers, crying, 'Victory to the Lord of mercy! Victory, victory to Mukunda!' [Ch. 29.] Victory to Mukunda, the all-merciful destroyer of the pairs, the Lord who delights his suppliants and scatters miscreant hosts, First Cause, the pitiful, ever supreme!' Full of joy, the gods rained down flowers and loud throbbed the drums.

There on the field of battle Rāma's limbs were beautiful with the beauty of many Loves. The crown of knotted hair on Rāma's head, with flowers intertwined, was very lovely, as when among the lightning-flashes stars glitter on the Purple Hills. With his arms he twirled his bow and arrows, and drops of blood were on his body, as beautiful as flocks of *rāyamunis*<sup>1</sup> perched happily on a *tamāla*. [D. 103.] The Lord shed on the assembled gods a glance of his gracious eyes and relieved them of their fears; and the bears and monkeys all rejoiced and cried, 'Victory to Mukunda, abode of bliss!'

[G. 103.] When she beheld her husband's heads, Mandodari was distraught and fell swooning to the ground. All her women arose and ran forward in tears; they raised her and came with her to Rāvan. When she saw her husband's plight, she cried aloud; her hair flew loose and she lost control of her limbs. Wildly beating her breast, she wept as she told of his glory: 'Before your might, my husband, earth ever reeled; fire, moon and sun waxed dim before your splendour; Śesanāga and the tortoise could not bear your weight! And now your body lies upon the ground, a heap of dust! Varuna, Kuvera, Indra, the Wind—not one of these had the courage to face you on the field. By the strength of your arm, my husband, you defeated Death and the king of hell, and now you lie there like a masterless slave. The whole world knows the greatness of

<sup>1</sup> A small red-spotted bird, male of the Red Avadavat, *Amandava amandava*.

your power; your sons and your kinsfolk were of indescribable might; but you fought against Rāma, and now your state is such that not one of your family survives to mourn you. All God's creation, lord, was in your power; the guardians of the quarters ever bowed their heads in awe. Now jackals are devouring your heads and arms—fit recompense for quarrelling with Rāma! Victim of fate, my husband, you heeded no advice, and deemed the Lord of all creation to be but mortal man.

[Ch. 30.] 'You deemed to be but mortal man Hari himself, come as a fire to burn the demon forest; and, dear husband, you refused to worship the Lord of all compassion, whom Śiva and Brahmā and all the gods adore. From birth you have made it your aim to injure others, and this body of yours has been one mass of sin; but Rāma now has granted you a place in his own realm, and him I worship, the faultless Absolute!' [D. 104.] Ah, my husband, there is no other Lord so merciful as Raghunāth, the Blessed God, who has bestowed on you the final liberation that contemplatives hardly win.'

[C. 104.] Gods, sages and adepts were all delighted to hear Mandodari's lament; Brahmā, Maheśa, Nārada, Sanaka and the rest—great sages versed in spiritual lore, feasted their eyes on Raghupati, all absorbed in an ecstasy of love. When Vibhiṣan saw all the women weeping, he felt very sad and went to them; he sorrowed to see his brother's plight. Then the Lord gave an order to his younger brother and Lakṣman did all he could to comfort him, and Vibhiṣan returned to the Lord, who looked on him with a gracious eye and said, 'Cease to mourn and perform the funeral rites'. He performed the last rites in obedience to the Lord's command with fitting ceremony and due regard for time and place.

[D. 105.] Mandodari and the other wives all offered the funeral oblation and returned to the palace, inwardly lauding Raghupati's many perfections.

[C. 105.] Vibhiṣan then returned and bowed his head, and the gracious Lord sent for his brother and said, 'Do you and the Monkey King, Aṅgad, Nala, Nila, Jāmbavān and the prudent Son of the Wind together go with Vibhiṣan and crown him king. I will not enter the city,' said Raghunāth, 'for my father forbade it; but I send you monkeys and my brother to represent myself.' The monkeys immediately departed at the Lord's command and made all ready for the coronation; with due respect they set him

on the throne and marked his forehead with the royal sign and sang his praises, all bowing before him with folded hands. Then with Vibhiṣan they rejoined the Lord.

Next, Raghubir called the monkeys together and gladdened them all with affectionate words. [Ch. 31.] With these ambrosial words he gladdened them: 'By your might the enemy has been slain and Vibhiṣan crowned king. Your glory will never be forgotten throughout the three spheres. Whoever sings with perfect devotion your fair renown and mine shall without effort pass across the boundless ocean of birth and death.'

[D. 106.] The assembled monkeys were never tired of listening to the words of their Lord; again and again they all bowed their heads and clasped his lotus feet.

[C. 106.] Then the Lord summoned Hanumān, 'Go you to Laṅkā,' said the Blessed Lord, 'and tell Jānakī all that has happened, and then return with tidings of her welfare.' When Hanumān entered the city, the demons, male and female, heard of it and ran to greet him. They did him all possible reverence and showed him where Janak's daughter was. The monkey did obeisance from a distance and Jānakī recognized him as Raghupati's envoy. 'Tell me, my friend,' she said, 'how is the Lord, abode of grace, and how are his brother and all the monkey host?' 'All is well,' said he, 'with the king of Kosala, and, mother, he has vanquished the Ten-headed on the field. Vibhiṣan now sits securely on the throne.' When she heard the monkey's news, her heart was full of joy.

[Ch. 32.] Her heart was full of joy; she trembled with emotion and her eyes filled with tears. Again and again Sītā said, 'What can I give you, monkey? In all the three spheres there is nothing so welcome as your tidings!' 'Believe me, mother,' he replied, 'assuredly this day I am king of the whole world in that I behold the faultless Rāma and his brother triumphant over the army of their foes!'

[D. 107.] 'Hearken, my son,' said she; 'may every virtue, Hanumān, abide in your heart and may the king of Kosala and Lakṣman ever be gracious to you! [C. 107.] And now, my friend, arrange for me to see with my own eyes that dark and delicate form.'

Then Hanumān returned to Rāma and told him that all was well with Janak's daughter. When he heard these tidings, the jewel of the Solar race sent for Prince Vibhiṣan and said, 'Do you go with the Son of the Wind and with due reverence bring Janak's daughter

here.' Swiftly they all went to the spot where Sītā was; all the female demons were humbly attending her. Vibhīṣan forthwith gave them their instructions and they bathed and anointed her and adorned her with jewels of every kind. Then they prepared and brought a charming palanquin, into which the princess of Videha joyously stepped with her thoughts fixed on her beloved Rāma, abode of bliss. All about the palanquin went guards with staves in their hands, all happy and enthusiastic. The bears and the monkeys all came to catch a glimpse of her, but the guards indignantly ran forward to beat them back; but Raghubir said, 'Do as I tell you, my friend, and escort Sītā hither on foot, that the monkeys may look on her as they would on their own mothers.' The holy Lord Raghunāth smiled as he said it. The bears and the monkeys were delighted to hear what the Lord had said and the gods rained down showers of blossoms from the sky.

Now before this Rāma had caused Sītā to enter the fire, and now he who witnesses the secrets of all hearts<sup>1</sup> desired to make her manifest again. [D. 108.] For this reason the Lord of all compassion issued a somewhat harsh command, whereat the female demons all began to grieve.

[C. 108.] Obedient to her lord's command, and pure in thought and word and deed, Sītā said, 'Lakṣman, be sharer in this pious rite and hasten to prepare the fire.' When Lakṣman heard Sītā's words, so full of desolation, discretion, piety and goodness, with tears in his eyes he folded his hands; he could say nothing to his Lord. Reading Rāma's mind, Lakṣman ran and brought a heap of wood and made ready the fire. When the princess of Videha saw the fiercely burning flames, she was glad at heart, and felt no fear. 'If in my heart,' she said, 'in thought and word and deed I have never left Raghubir and turned to another, then, O Fire, who knowest the thoughts of all, be thou to me as cooling sandalwood!'

[Ch. 33.] Thinking on the Lord, the princess of Mithilā entered the fire, cool as sandalwood, saying, 'Glory to the king of Kosala, whom Śiva adores! To his feet is my most pure devotion!' Her shadow and the stain of public shame were burnt up in the blazing fire. None understood the action of the Lord; in the heavens the gods, adepts and sages stood at gaze. Then Fire in bodily form took the hand of the true Sītā, famed in the scriptures and the

<sup>1</sup> *antara sākhi*: so the *fikā*, referring the epithet to Rāma. Some refer it to *agni*. The true Sītā had entered the fire before the rape of her image by Rāvan; Rāma now wished her to be restored to him from the fire.

world, and brought her and committed her to Rāma's care, even as the Ocean of Milk committed Lakṣmī to her lord. So sat she at Rāma's left hand, and her fair beauty was as lovely as a golden lotus bud near to a dark lotus newly opened.

[D. 109a.] The gods rejoiced and rained down flowers and music sounded in the sky; Kinnaras sang and Apsarās danced, mounted on their celestial cars; [109b.] and when they beheld the infinite, measureless glory of Rāma and Sītā, the bears and the monkeys rejoiced and cried, 'Glory to Raghupati, the quintessence of joy!'

[C. 109.] Then with Raghupati's leave Mātali bowed his head before his feet and took his departure. The gods came, thinking as always only of themselves, and addressed him with feigned piety: 'O Raghurāya, friend of the humble, Lord of mercy, thou, a god, hast had pity on the gods! This lustful villain, inveterate foe of all creation, ever pursuing the path of evil, has been brought to nought by his own sin. Thou art the Absolute, ever the same, indestructible, constant, immutable and detached, indivisible, impersonal and from everlasting; without sin or fault; invincible and unerring energy and full of compassion. Thou didst assume the forms of fish and tortoise and boar, Narasimha, dwarf and Paraśurāma.<sup>1</sup> Whenever the gods suffered affliction, thou, Lord, in manifold forms didst bring it to an end. This Rāvan, black-hearted scoundrel though he was, ever hostile to the gods, the slave of lust and greed and pride, and very passionate, this prince of vileness in spite of all has won to thy realm; and at this we marvel! We gods, though lords of high estate, in our inveterate selfishness have forgotten devotion to our Lord, and thus are ever tossed about in the flood of birth and death. Save us now, O Lord, who come to thee for refuge!'

[D. 110.] Thus making supplication the gods and the adepts stood round about him with folded hands, while Brahmā with great devotion, trembling with rapture, next sang this song of praise:

[Ch. 34.] 'Glory to Rāma, abode of everlasting bliss, Hari himself, the Raghu prince who bears the bow and arrows! Thou, O Lord, art a lion to rend the elephant of birth and death, ocean of all perfections, wise omnipresent ruler! The incomparable beauty of thy form is the beauty of a multitude of Loves; adepts and royal

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Viṣṇu.

sages and poets hymn thy virtues; unsullied is thy glory. Thou didst lay hold on Rāvan in thy wrath as the king of birds a mighty serpent. Lord, thou delightest the faithful and puttest care and fear to flight, passionless ever, quintessence of wisdom. Noble are thy descents into the world and of infinite excellence, sum of all mystic knowledge, relieving the earth of her burdens. Unborn, all-pervading, alone, without beginning, I worship thee with joy, O Rāma, source of eternal compassion !

'O jewel of the house of Raghu, slayer of Dūṣāṇa,<sup>1</sup> thou hast raised Vibhiṣan, thy humble servant, to the throne. Treasury of virtue and wisdom, incomprehensible, unborn, I ever worship thee, O Rāma, omnipresent, passionless ! Terrible is the power of thy strong arms; full well thou knowest how to annihilate the wicked. In thy compassion thou befriendest the lowly and undeserving; I worship thee, in whom all beauty dwells, and Sītā too !

'Thou doest deliver man from birth and death, transcending cause and effect, destroyer of the dreadful sins to which the mind gives birth ! Bearer of the beauteous bow and arrows and quiver, with eyes like the rose-red lotus, king of kings, abode of bliss and handsome spouse of Laks̄mi, subduer of pride and lust and false ideas of self; blameless, indivisible, imperceptible to sense, ever all and yet not all—a Vedic doctrine, no mere human fiction—as sunlight is separate from the sun and yet not separate ! How happy, all-pervading Lord, are all these monkeys who reverently gaze upon thy face ! A curse, O Hari, on our lives and these celestial bodies, wherein we have neglected thy worship and have lost our way among worldly things !

'Now, O thou who art merciful to the humble, have mercy upon me and rid me of those thoughts that make for separateness and cause me to do what I should not and to walk content, deeming pain to be pleasure. O thou who destroyest the wicked, beauteous jewel of the earth, whose lotus feet Śambhu and Umā adore, O king of kings, grant me this boon, that I may ever love thy lotus feet and so be blessed !'

[D. 111.] Thus did Brahmā make his humble prayer, trembling all over with devotion, nor could he tire of gazing at the ocean of beauty.

[C. 110.] At that moment Daśarath arrived, and when he saw his son, his eyes filled with tears. The Lord and his younger brother

<sup>1</sup> dūṣāṇa-hā also means 'doṣon ko harnewale'.

did obeisance and their father gave them his blessing. ‘Father,’ said Rāma, ‘it is entirely by virtue of the merit you have won that I have conquered the invincible Demon King.’ When he heard his son’s words, he loved him all the more; his eyes filled with tears and he trembled with emotion. Raghu-pati remembered the love that Daśarath had borne him in life and, looking upon his father, bestowed on him perfect knowledge. Daśarath had devoted himself to worship of the separate object, and that, Umā, is why he had not attained to liberation; for those who worship the personal are not released, but Rāma grants them faith in his own person.<sup>1</sup> Daśarath, after repeatedly doing obeisance to the Lord, returned with joy to his heavenly home.

[D. 112.] Beholding the beauty of the Lord, the wise king of Kosala, and of his brother and Jānaki, the king of heaven rejoiced and sang this hymn of praise:

[Ch. 35.] ‘Glory to Rāma, in whom all beauty dwells, giver of rest to the suppliant, bearer of the beauteous quiver, bow and arrows, glorious and strong of arm! Glory to the foe of Dūṣaṇa and Khara, slaughterer of the demon host! My Lord hath slain this wicked one and all the gods have found a champion! Glory to him who rids earth of her burden, of high and limitless majesty! Glory to Rāvaṇ’s foe, the meroiful, who hath brought the demons to nought!

‘Proud of his mighty strength, the king of Lankā subdued gods and Gandharvas and relentlessly pursued sages, adepts, men, birds and serpents. That vilest and most evil of sinners, ever bent on harming others, hath reaped his due reward. Give ear now, O thou who hast compassion on the lowly, with thy large lotus eyes! Very arrogant was I and thought I had no equal; but now that I behold my Lord’s lotus feet, fled is my pride that brought me nought but sorrow. Some there are who contemplate the impersonal Absolute which scripture hymns as the unmanifest; but I delight in the king of Kosala, the Lord Rāma himself in personal form.

‘O make thy home in my heart, together with thy brother and the princess of Videha; accept me as thy own servant, O Lakṣmi’s lord, and grant me faith! [Ch. 36.] Grant me faith, O Lakṣmi’s lord, who freest thy suppliants from fear and givest them peace!

<sup>1</sup> Some commentators interpret this passage as implying that Rāma, thinking the *svāmī-sevaka* relation of the *bheda-bhakta* unfitting for father and son, so revealed his true being that Daśarath attained to *sādūjya-mokṣa*.

I worship thee, O Rāma, abode of bliss, Raghuṇāyak, beauteous as many Loves! O thou who gladdenest the host of heaven and dost destroy the pairs, incarnate in unequalled might, worshipped by Brahmā, Śaṅkara and all the gods, thee I adore, Rāma, tender and compassionate!

[D. 113.] 'Now graciously look upon me and give me thy commands, O Lord of grace. What can I do?'

[C. 111.] To this loving plea the compassionate Lord replied, 'Hearken, O Lord of heaven; my monkeys and bears whom the demons have slain are lying there upon the ground. They have given their lives on my behalf. Wise king of the gods, revive them all!'

Hearken, king of birds; this appeal of the Lord was very mysterious, and only wise mystics comprehend it. The Lord can slay the three worlds and bring them to life. His aim was only to exalt the power of Indra.

Indra shed nectar on the monkeys and the bears and revived them, and they all arose with joy and came to their Lord. Though the shower of nectar fell on both the hosts, the bears and the monkeys came to life but not the demons; for their souls had taken Rāma's form; the bonds of birth and death were burst and they were liberated; but the monkeys and the bears were all in essence divine, and so were brought to life by Raghupati's will. Who is there so kind to the lowly as Rāma, who granted liberation to all the demons? And even Rāvan, that evil, lecherous sink of pollution, won to that state which the holiest sages fail to reach.

[D. 114a.] All the gods rained down flowers, and mounting their graceful cars departed. Then the all-wise Śambhu seized the opportunity to approach the Lord, [114b.] and folding his hands with the utmost devotion, with his lotus eyes full of tears, trembling with emotion and faltering in speech, Tripurāri made petition:

[Ch. 37.] 'O Lord of the house of Raghu, who bearest in thy hands the glorious bow and beauteous arrows, protect me! O mighty wind to scatter the dense clouds of ignorance, O fire to consume the thickets of doubt, delight of the gods, impersonal, personal, fair shrine of all perfections, sun to disperse the darkness of error by the might of thy brilliant rays, lion to slay the elephants of lust and wrath and pride, dwell ever in the grove that is thy servant's soul!'

'Hard frost to wither up the lotus bed of sensual desires, high and transcending thought, Mount Mandara to churn the sea of

birth and death, deliver me from that which I most dread and bring me safely over the ocean of mortality so hard to cross !

'O Rāma, dark of hue and lotus-eyed, friend of the humble and saviour of the suppliant, do thou, O king, with Jānaki and thy brother, dwell ever in my heart ! Thou gladdenest the sages and adornest the round earth, O Lord of Tulasi Dās, destroyer of dread ! [D. 115.] Lord, when thou art crowned king in the city of Kosala, I shall come, O ocean of grace, to witness the noble ceremony.'

[C. 112.] When Śambhu had made his petition and departed, Vibhiṣan drew near to the Lord, and bowing his head before his feet addressed him in gentle tones : 'Hear my prayer, O Lord who bearest Śārṅga ! My Lord has slain Rāvan with all his house and army and has made known his unsullied renown throughout the three worlds. On me, moreover, wretched, sinful, foolish and of lowly birth, has he shed his manifold favours. Now, Lord, make pure thy servant's house by bathing there and refreshing thyself after the toil of battle. Review my treasure, my palace and my wealth and graciously be pleased to bestow them on the monkeys. Lord, make me altogether thine own and take me with thee when thou goest to the city of Avadh.'

When the Lord of compassion heard his gentle speech, both his large eyes filled with tears. [D. 116a.] 'Brother,' he said, 'your treasure and your house and all you have are mine—that indeed is true; but when I think on Bharat's plight, a moment seems to me like an aeon in the passing. [116b.] Clad in ascetic garb, with emaciated frame, he never ceases to repeat my name. So, friend, I beseech you, make all endeavour that I may see him soon. [116c.] If I go after the period of my exile is over, I may not find my brother still alive,' and at the thought of his younger brother's affection the Lord trembled again and again with emotion; [116d.] 'may you reign for a full aeon and fix your thoughts on me; so in the end will you enter my realm whither all good men go.'

[C. 113.] When he heard Rāma's words, Vibhiṣan joyfully clasped the feet of the gracious Lord, and the monkeys and the bears all rejoiced, and clasping the Lord's feet praised his spotless virtues. Then Vibhiṣan betook himself to the palace and loaded the car with jewels and raiment in abundance. He took Puspaka and set it before the Lord, whereupon the ocean of grace said with a smile, 'Hearken, Vibhiṣan, my friend; mount the car and ascend to the sky, then shower down the clothes and jewels.' Vibhiṣan at once

flew up to the heavens and rained down all the gems and garments. Each took up what pleased him best; the monkeys put the jewels into their mouths and threw them down again, while Rāma and his brother and Sītā laughed. Very sportive is the Lord of grace!

[D. 117a.] He whom sages cannot reach by contemplation, he whom the Veda calls 'Not thus, not thus', even the Lord of grace amused himself with the monkeys. [117b.] O Umā, Rāma is moved to show favour less by ascetic practice and prayer, penance, various sacrifice, vows and observance than by single-minded love!

[C. 114.] The bears and the monkeys picked up the clothes and the jewels and each one put them on and came to Raghupati. When he saw the varied styles of all the monkeys, the king of Kosala laughed again and again. Raghurāya looked on them all with kindness and spoke in gentle tones: 'It was by your might that I slew Rāvan and set Vibhiṣan on the throne. Now go, all of you, each to his own home; remember me and fear no one.'

To this all the monkeys, distraught with love, reverently replied with folded hands, 'Lord, all you say is meet and right for you; yet we, when we hear it, are foolishly perplexed. You who are Raghunāth, Lord of the three spheres, accepted the monkeys as your humble servants and gave us a master; so now when we hear our Lord's commendation, we are ready to die of shame. Is it possible for a mosquito to help the king of birds?' As they gazed on Rāma's face, the monkeys and the bears were lost in love and longed no more for home. [D. 118a.] But at the Lord's command the monkeys and the bears, laying on their hearts the form of Rāma, all took their departure with mingled joy and melancholy and many a humble prayer.

[118b.] The Monkey King, Nila, the king of the bears, Āngad, Nala and Hanumān, together with Vibhiṣan and all the other mighty monkey captains could speak no word for very love; [118c.] their eyes filled with tears, nor could they close them for a moment as they stood before Rāma and gazed upon him.

[C. 115.] When he beheld their rapturous devotion, Raghurāj took them all up with him into the car, and after silently bowing his head before the Brāhmans' feet, directed the chariot towards the north. As the car set forth, a great cry arose; everyone was shouting, 'Glory to Raghubir!'

In the car was a throne, very lofty and splendid, and on it the Lord and Sītā took their seat. Rāma and his bride shone glorious thereon like a dark cloud on Meru's peak with lightning flashing

about it. Very swiftly sped the beauteous car; the gods rejoiced and showered down blossoms. Cool, soft and fragrant breezes blew refreshingly; the water of ocean, lake and river was crystal clear; on every side were met fair omens; the hearts of all were cheerful, and every quarter of the sky was cloudless. 'Sītā,' said Raghubir, 'look at the battlefield; that is where Lakṣman slew Indrajit, and those huge demons lying on the field were slain by Hanumān and Aṅgad; and here were killed Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvan, the two brothers who discomfited gods and sages. [D. 119a.] Here I had the bridge built and set up the image of Siva, abode of bliss.' The gracious Lord and Sītā did obeisance to Śambhu. [D. 119b.] Wherever the Lord of grace had encamped or rested in the forest, he pointed out every place to Jānakī and told her the name of each.

[C. 116.] Swiftly the car travelled on to the most beautiful forest of Dandaka, where dwelt Agastya and many other high sages; and Rāma visited the homes of them all. After receiving the blessing of all the seers, the Lord of the world came to Citrakūta; there he gladdened the hermits, and the car sped swiftly on. Next, Rāma pointed out to Jānakī the Yamunā, that beautiful river that washes away the pollution of the Kaliyuga; then they beheld the holy Gaṅgā and Rāma bade Sītā do obeisance. 'Next,' he said, 'behold Prayāga, most sacred of holy places, at the sight of which the sins of a myriad lives take flight; see, moreover, all-sanctifying Triveni that puts an end to sorrow and leads men up to Hari's realm; and now behold the city of Avadh, that most holy city that heals all pains and the sickness of mortality.' [D. 120a.] The gracious Lord and Sītā did obeisance to Avadh. Rāma trembled with emotion and his eyes were full of tears as again and again he expressed his joy. [120b.] Then the Lord came to Triveni and bathed there with delight, and both he and the monkeys bestowed all manner of gifts on the Brāhmans.

[C. 117.] The Lord gave instructions to Hanumān: 'Assume the form of a Brāhmaṇ student and enter the city of Avadh. Tell Bharat that all is well with us, and then return with news of him.' Straightway the Son of the Wind set out, and the Lord went to see Bharadvāja. The sage paid him all reverence, sang his praises and gave him his blessing. When the Lord had done homage to the sage's feet with folded hands, he mounted his car and travelled on.

Now when the Niśāda heard that the Lord had arrived, he summoned his people and cried, 'Boats! Where are the boats?'

Then the chariot crossed the Gaṅgā and at the Lord's command came down on the river bank; and Sītā devoutly worshipped the celestial river and fell at its feet. Joyfully Gaṅgā blessed her: 'Fair lady, may your wedded life be ever blessed!' At the news Guha ran forward in an ecstasy of love and blissfully drew near to the Lord; and when he saw the Lord and the princess of Videha, he fell unconscious to the ground. Beholding his marvellous devotion, Raghubir joyfully raised him and clasped him to his bosom.

[Ch. 37.] He clasped him to his breast, even Lakṣmi's lord, the treasure-house of grace, the chiefest of the wise. He seated him very close beside himself and asked him how he fared. Guha humbly replied, 'Now all is well with me, for I behold those lotus feet which Brahmā and Śaṅkara adore. O Rāma, home of bliss, whose every wish has been fulfilled, I worship thee! Rāma, I worship thee!'

(This utterly low-born Niśāda Hari clasped to his breast as though he were Bharat! Insensate fool am I, says Tulasi Dās, that I should in my ignorance have neglected such a Lord! These holy acts of Rāvan's foe lead ever to devotion to Rāma's feet; they stamp out lust and all the other vices and bestow mystic wisdom; joyously are they hymned by god, adept and sage! [D. 121a.] To those wise men who listen to the story of Raghubir's victorious exploits on the field the Blessed Lord grants ever victory, wisdom and dominion. [121b.] See and consider, O soul! This Kaliyuga is defilement's home; there is no other name that can save us but the name of the Lord Raghunāth !)

## THE EPILOGUE

[**Sloka 1.]** I ever worship the adorable Rāma, Jānaki's lord, Raghubar, mounted on Puṣpaka, dark as the dark-blue sheen of a peacock's neck, highest of gods, beautified with the mark of the Brāhmaṇa's lotus foot, perfect in loveliness, yellow-clad, lotus-eyed and ever very gracious, bearing the bow and arrows in his hands, attended by his monkeys and adored by his brother. Beautiful and tender are the lotus feet of the king of Kosala, worshipped by Brahmā and Maheśa, fondled by the lotus hands of Jānaki and haunted by the souls of contemplatives as by bees.

I worship Śaṅkara, who frees men from the power of Love, beautiful and white as the jasmine or the moon or the conch, lord of Ambikā, granter of all the heart desires, with lovely lotus eyes, compassionate.

[**Dohā.]** There remained but one day of the period of Rāma's exile and the people of the city were very impatient. Everywhere men and women were anxious, grown thin during Rāma's absence. But now every omen was favourable and all were of good cheer. The very city seemed fair in every part as though it were declaring the coming of the Lord. Kausalyā and all the other queens were glad at heart as though one were just now telling them that the Lord had come with Sītā and his brother. Bharat's right eye and arm repeatedly throbbed; he recognized the omens and rejoiced; but he began to think, [**C. 1.]** 'There remains but one day of the period on whose end I had set my hope. When I realize that, I feel unutterable anxiety. Why has my Lord not come? Perhaps he thinks me worthless and has forgotten me. Ah, happy is Lakṣman and thrice blest, devoted to Rāma's lotus feet! The Lord knew me to be guileful and wicked, and that is why he did not take me with him. If the Lord were to take my deeds into account, I should not find salvation for tens of millions of ages. But the Lord regards not the faults of the faithful, for he is the friend of the humble and very tender-hearted. Therefore I have sure confidence that Rāma will return, for the omens are good. But if the time passes and I still live, who in the world so base as I?' [**D. 1a.]** While Bharat's soul was drowning in the sea of separation

from Rāma, came the Son of the Wind in Brāhmaṇ form like a boat. [1b.] He saw Bharat seated on a mat of grass, with a crown of knotted hair and emaciated frame, ever repeating 'Rāma, Rāma, Raghupati', with tears streaming from his eyes. [C. 2.] When he saw him, Hanumān was greatly rejoiced; he trembled with emotion and tears poured from his eyes. His heart was filled with rapture and he spoke words sweet as ambrosia to the ear: 'He for whose absence you grieve night and day, ever repeating the roll of his perfections, the glory of the house of Raghu, giver of bliss to the faithful, deliverer of gods and sages, has returned in safety. The Lord has conquered the foe in battle and the gods sing his glory. He is coming to the city with Sītā and his brother.'

When Bharat heard it, all his sorrows were forgotten, as when a thirsty man finds water. 'Who are you, friend,' he said, 'and where have you come from? Very welcome tidings have you brought me.' 'Hearken, gracious Lord,' he replied; 'I am a monkey, Son of the Wind, and my name is Hanumān. I am the servant of Raghupati, friend of the humble.'

Thereupon Bharat arose and reverently embraced him; and as he embraced him, his heart overflowed with love; tears poured from his eyes and he trembled with emotion. 'Monkey,' he said, 'at the sight of you all my sorrows have passed away, for today I have met in you my beloved Rāma!' Again and again he asked how he fared and said, 'Listen, brother; what can I give you? Think as I may, I can imagine no tidings in the world so welcome as these. Friend, I am ever in your debt. Tell me now all that the Lord has done.' Then Hanumān bowed his head before his feet and told him the whole tale of Raghupati's exploits.

'Tell me, monkey,' said Bharat, 'does my gracious master ever think on me as his servant? [Ch. 1.] Does the jewel of the house of Raghu ever think on me as his servant?'

When he heard Bharat's very humble question, the monkey trembled with emotion and fell at his feet. He thought, 'He whose virtues Raghubir, Lord of all creation, told with his own lips must surely be humble and very pure, an ocean of perfections.'

[D. 2a.] 'Lord,' he said, 'you are dear to Rāma as life itself; what I say is true, dear master.' Again and again Bharat embraced him when he heard it and his heart could not contain his joy.

[S. 2b.] The monkey bowed his head before Bharat's feet and swiftly returned to Rāma and told him all was well. Joyfully the Lord mounted his chariot and flew on.

[C. 3.] Overjoyed, Bharat entered the city of Kosala and told the *guru* all the news. Then he made it known in the palace that Raghurāī was safe and was coming to the city. When they heard the news, all the queens arose in haste and Bharat calmed them by telling them that the Lord was well. When the citizens heard the tidings, they all ran out delighted, both men and women, and matrons came with graceful gait, singing as they bore golden, dishes laden with curds and sacred grass and yellow pigment fruit and flowers and sprigs of the fresh *tulasi* plant—all auspicious objects. They got up and ran just as they were, nor stayed to bring with them the children or the old; and each was asking the other, 'Brother, have you seen the gracious Raghurāī?' When the city of Avadh learnt that the Lord was coming, it became lovely beyond compare; grateful breezes blew, cool, mild and fragrant, and the water of Sarayū became crystal clear.

[D. 3a.] Joyfully went forth Bharat with the *guru*, his kinsfolk, his younger brother and a company of Brāhmans, with deep devotion in his heart, to meet the gracious Lord. [3b.] Many women mounted to the upper storeys and looked for the car in the skies; and when they saw it, they joyously chanted in sweet tones glad songs of welcome. [3c.] Raghupati was the full moon and his city the sea that swelled in tumultuous rapture to behold him, and the women were like the waves.

[C. 4.] Meanwhile, the sun of the lotus Solar race was pointing out the beautiful city to the monkeys: 'Hearken, Monkey King, Aṅgad and king of Laṅkā; this is a holy city and this land a land of beauty. Though all have praised Vaikuntha, renowned in the Vedas and Purāṇas and known to all the world, yet is it not so dear to me as this city of Avadh; and few are they who comprehend this mystery. This lovely city is the place where I was born, and to the north there flows the purifying Sarayū, and all who bathe therein win effortless a home near me. Very dear to me are those who dwell therein; this city is the city of perfect bliss, granting its citizens a home with me hereafter.' All the monkeys rejoiced when they heard the Lord's words and cried, 'Blessed is Avadh that Rāma has praised!'

[D. 4a.] When the Blessed Lord, the ocean of grace, saw all the people coming out, he bade the car approach the city and dismounted. [4b.] Dismounting, the Lord bade Puspaka return to Kuvera, and at Rāma's bidding the car departed; great was its joy, yet much it grieved to leave him.

[C. 5.] With Bharat came all the people, wasted with sorrow for the Lord Raghubir's absence. When the Lord saw Vāmadeva and Vasishtha, chief of sages, he laid his bow and arrows on the ground. Trembling with emotion, he and his brother ran to meet his *guru* and clasped his lotus feet. The lord of sages embraced them and asked them how they fared. 'By your favour,' they replied, 'we are well.' The Lord of the house of Raghu, upholder of righteousness, greeted all the Brāhmans and bowed his head before them. Then Bharat clasped the Lord's lotus feet that gods and sages and Śiva and Brahmā adore. He fell to the ground and would not be raised, but the ocean of grace clasped him to his breast perforce. His dark body quivered with emotion and tears flooded his eyes as water the newly opened lotus.

[Ch. 2.] Tears streamed from his lotus eyes and his charming body trembled with emotion. With deep affection the Lord of the three worlds embraced his younger brother and clasped him to his heart. I know of naught to compare with the entrancing scene of the Lord's meeting with his brother, as though Love and Desire in human form had met in fair embrace. The merciful Lord asked how he fared, but Bharat could not speak at once. Hearken, Śivā; such bliss as his is beyond speech and thought; only he may know it who feels it. 'Now fare I well, O lord of Kosala, for you have allowed your servant to see you, regarding his pitiable state. I was sinking in the sea of bereavement, but you, O gracious Lord, have grasped my hand and drawn me out.'

[D. 5.] Then the Lord with great gladness embraced Śatrughna and took him to his heart; and the two brothers, Lakṣman and Bharat, embraced each other with the utmost affection. [C. 6.] Next, Śatrughna and Lakṣman embraced each other, so bringing to an end the intolerable grief of separation; and Bharat and his brother bowed their heads before Sitā's feet and experienced perfect happiness. The citizens rejoiced to see the Lord, and their sorrow at his absence was forgotten. When the gracious Kharāri saw that everyone was affectionately impatient to greet him, he wrought a miracle. At one and the same moment he became manifest in numberless forms and graciously greeted them all with the greeting due to each. Looking on them all, both men and women, with kindly eyes, Raghubir brought their sorrows to an end. Thus in a moment the Blessed Lord greeted them all, and no one, Umā, fathomed the mystery.

Having thus made them all happy, Rāma, the home of loving-kindness and virtue, went forward. Kausalyā and the other queens all ran to meet him as cows that have lately calved run when they see their young; [Ch. 3.] as cows that have left their young calves in the shed and have been driven to the pasture to graze run lowing with streaming udders towards the city at close of day. The Lord embraced all the queens with great affection and spoke to them most tenderly; banished was the grievous sorrow that his absence had caused; their joy and happiness knew no bounds.

[D. 6a.] Sumitrā embraced her son, realizing his devotion to Rāma's feet; and when Kaikeyī embraced Rāma, she felt utterly ashamed. [6b.] Lakṣman embraced all the queens and received their blessing with joy; but though he embraced Kaikeyī again and again, her melancholy was not dispelled. [C. 7.] The princess of Videha embraced all her mothers-in-law and was overjoyed to touch their feet. They blessed her and asked how she fared, saying, 'May you ever be a happy wedded wife!' They all gazed at Raghupati's lotus face and checked their tears, for it was an auspicious hour. They waved their festal lamps in golden dishes about his head, feasting their eyes continually on the Lord's fair form. They lavished on him all kinds of offerings and their hearts were full of perfect bliss and joy. Again and again did Kausalyā gaze on Raghubir, the valiant and gracious hero, and time and again she wondered how he had slain the king of Lankā. 'My two boys,' she thought, 'are very young and tender, and the demon was a mighty warrior of tremendous strength!' [D. 7.] His mother gazed upon the Lord and Lakṣman and Sītā, and supreme felicity flooded her soul as she ceased not to tremble with emotion. [C. 8.] The lord of Lankā, the Monkey King, Nala and Nila, Jambavān, Āngad the high-minded, Hanumān and all the other monkey heroes assumed the forms of handsome men and were all lauding with great devotion and reverence Bharat's love and goodness and his ascetic vows and ways of life; and when they beheld the behaviour of those who dwelt in the city, they all praised them too for the love they bore to the feet of the Lord.

Then Raghupati called all his comrades together and directed every one of them to touch the *guru's* feet: 'The *guru* Vasiṣṭha', he said, 'is to be reverenced by the whole of my house; it is of his grace that the demons were slaughtered on the field. And hearken, O sage; all these are my friends; they were boats to rescue me in

the sea of battle; they sacrificed their lives on my behalf and are dearer to me than Bharat himself.' When they heard the Lord's words, they were all transported with joy; thus moment by moment they experienced ever new delights. [D. 8a.] Then they bowed their heads before Kausalyā's feet, and she joyfully blessed them and said, 'You are as dear to me as Raghunāth'. [8b.] The sky was filled with showers of blossoms as the Lord of bliss went on to the palace, and crowds of men and women of the city mounted to the upper storeys to watch him.

[C. 9.] They all ornamented golden pitchers with various adornments and set them at their doors; they all fashioned festoons and flags and banners to mark the glad occasion. All the streets were sprinkled with perfumes and many a square design was traced and filled in with pearls. Every kind of festive preparation was made and joyous music sounded in the city. Everywhere women were making their offerings and calling down blessings with hearts full of joy, and many young women were preparing festal lamps in golden dishes and singing auspicious songs. They waved the festal lamps about the head of him who banishes all woe, the sun that quickens the lotus bed of the house of Raghu. The Veda, Śeṣa and Śāradā would tell of the splendour and wealth and blessedness of the city, but even they fall dumb before the scene; then how, O Umā, can mortal man describe its glory?

[D. 9a.] The women were lilies and Avadh a lake and Raghupati's absence the sun; but now the sun had set and the lilies opened their blossoms to look upon Rāma, the full moon. [9b.] All kinds of favourable omens were seen and music sounded in the heavens. Thus having blessed the men and women of the city with his protecting presence, the Blessed Lord proceeded to the palace.

[C. 10.] The Lord knew that Kaikeyi felt ashamed; so first of all, Bhavāni, he went to her apartments; there he reassured and comforted her, and then Hari went on to his own palace. When the gracious Lord entered his palace, all the men and women of the city were overjoyed. The *guru* Vasistha summoned the Brāhmans and said, 'Today the hour and the date and all the omens are propitious; do all you Brāhmans be pleased to direct that Rāmacandra ascend the throne'. All the Brāhmans were delighted to hear the sage Vasistha's gracious order, and a number of them gently replied, 'Rāma's coronation brings gladness to the whole

world; now, O great sage, make no delay, but mark the king's forehead with the mark of sovereignty.'

[D. 10a.] Then the sage gave orders to Sumantra, who gladly went and speedily made ready a number of chariots, horses and elephants, [10b.] and then sent out messengers in all directions and caused auspicious objects to be brought. Thereafter he joyfully returned and bowed his head before Vasistha's feet.

[C. 11.] The city of Avadh was charmingly decorated and the gods showered down a perfect cascade of flowers. Rāma summoned his servants and told them first of all to see to his friends' ablutions. The servants ran obediently this way and that and at once prepared the bath for Sugriva and the rest. Then Rāma, the Lord of grace, sent for Bharat and with his own hands uncoiled his knotted hair, and the Lord, the gracious Raghurāi, who loves his worshippers, bathed his three brothers. Not a thousand million Śeṣas can describe Bharat's good fortune and the Lord's tender love. Next, Rāma untied his own coiled tresses and with the *guru*'s permission took his bath; and after his ablutions the Lord adorned himself with jewels, and a hundred Loves were abashed at the sight of his beauteous limbs.

[D. 11a.] Straightway the queens bathed Jānaki with reverence, dressed her in royal robes and decked her every limb with priceless ornaments. [11b.] At Rāma's left hand she sat, even Sītā, the perfection of beauty and virtue; and when the queens saw her, they all rejoiced and thought it the happiest day of their lives.

[11c.] Hearken, king of birds; at that hour Brahmā, Śiva and a company of sages and all the gods mounted their chariots and came to see the source of joy.

[C. 12.] The sage was in ecstasies as he looked upon the Lord, and at once he ordered a magnificent throne to be brought, bright as the sun, brighter than words can tell. Rāma bowed to the Brāhmans and took his seat thereon. The assembly of the sages was enraptured at the sight of Raghurāi and Janak's daughter. Then the Brāhmans pronounced the Vedic spells and gods and sages shouted 'Glory! Glory!' in the skies. First, the sage Vasistha marked his forehead, and then bade all the Brāhmans do so too. The queens rejoiced as they gazed upon their son, and repeatedly waved their festal lamps about his head. They gave all manner of gifts to the Brāhmans and relieved the wants of all the beggars. The gods sounded their drums when they saw the Lord of the three worlds seated on his throne.

[Ch. 4.] Many a drum sounded in the heavens; Gandharvas and Kinnaras sang and bands of Apsarās danced. Gods and sages were in ecstasies of bliss. Bharat and his brothers, together with Vibhiṣan, Āngad, Hanumān and the rest, were glorious to behold, bearing the umbrella, the whisk, the fan, the bow, the sword, the shield and the spear. The jewel of the Solar race, with Lakṣmi by his side, was beautiful as many Loves; his body, lovely as a fresh rain-burdened cloud, and the yellow dress he wore entranced the gods; his crown and bracelets and other marvellous adornments bedecked his every limb; blessed were those who looked upon him, with his lotus eyes, long arms and stalwart chest. [D. 12a.] I cannot describe, Garuḍ, the rapturous beauty of that scene. Śāradā, Śeṣa and the Veda speak of it, and Maheśa alone can comprehend its charm.

[12b.] Singing their several songs of praise, the gods departed each to his own abode; and then the Vedas in the form of bards drew near to the Lord Rāma. [12c.] The omniscient Lord of grace did lowly reverence, but no one else at all penetrated the mystery. The Vedas began to sing his excellent perfections:

[Ch. 5.] 'O thou who art personal and impersonal, matchless in beauty, chiefest of kings, thou hast slain by the might of thine arm Rāvan and all the other formidable, powerful and evil demons! Glory to thee! Descending in the form of man, thou hast rid the world of its burden and burnt to ashes its tormenting woes! Glory to thee, the merciful Lord, protector of the suppliant!

'Thee we adore together with thy consort! Subject to thine inescapable illusion, gods and demons, serpents and men and all creation, moving and unmoved, stray, O Hari, night and day on the endless path of birth and death, a prey to fate and destiny and nature's elements; but they on whom thou lookest, O Lord, with an eye of compassion have been delivered from every pain. Save us, O thou who well knowest how to banish the sorrow of mortality. O Rāma, we adore thee!

'When men, intoxicated with the pride of wisdom, despise that faith in thee which frees them from rebirth, even though they reach that goal, O Hari, which gods may scarcely reach, we see them falling from that high estate; but those who place their trust in thee and abandoning all other hope become and remain thy servants, ever repeating thy name, O Lord, in prayer, pass without effort across the sea of birth and death; even so we fix our thoughts on thee!

'Those feet which Śiva and Brahmā reverence, those feet by the touch of whose blessed dust the sage's wife was saved, those feet from whose nails sprang forth the sacred river, reverenced by sages and purifying the three spheres, those feet marked with the flag, the thunderbolt, the goad and the lotus, which were pierced by thorns as they wandered in the woods, even those two lotus feet, Mukunda, Rāma, Sītā's lord, we ever worship !

'We adore the tree of the manifest world; Vedas and Agamas have declared it to be without origin and its root the unmanifest. Its coats of bark are four; its boughs are six; its lesser branches twenty-five; countless the leaves, many the flowers it bears; it puts forth two kinds of fruit, one sour, one sweet; there is but one creeper only that clings thereto, and it ever bears fresh fruit and blossoms.'<sup>1</sup>

'Let those who contemplate the Absolute, from everlasting and without a second, attainable only by intuition, beyond intellectual reach, speak of It and know It; we, O Lord, hymn unceasingly thy glory as personal !

'O home of compassion, Lord in whom all goodness dwells, O divine being, this is the boon we crave, that in thought and word and deed we may be changelessly devoted to thy feet !'

[D. 13a.] Thus in the sight of all the Vedas uttered this noble prayer, then vanished and returned to Brahmā's realm.

[13b.] Hearken, Garur; next, Śāribhu came to Raghubir and made petition with faltering voice, trembling all over with emotion: [Ch. 6.] 'Glory to Rāma, Sītā's lord, subduer of the pains of birth and death ! Protect thy servant, all unnerved by dread ! O king of Avadh, Lord of heaven, Lakṣmi's spouse, all-powerful, I come to thee for refuge, Lord, and crave protection ! Thou verily didst slay the demon with ten heads and twenty arms and heal the earth of its sore sickness; the demon hosts were consumed like moths by the fierce flame of thy fiery arrows. Most lovely ornament of the round world, bearing the beauteous bow and arrows and quiver, thou quellest pride and folly and profound

<sup>1</sup> The Tree. This passage has been interpreted in countless ways. (a) The four coats of bark: the four Vedas, or *mana*, *buddhi*, *cita*, *ahamkāra*, or *jāgrat*, *svapna*, *susupti*, *turiya*, or the four *yugas*, or *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*, or the four modes of birth. (b) The six boughs: *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *ahamkāra*, or the six stages of life from conception to death, or the six schools of philosophy, or the five *jñānendriya* and *mana*. (c) The twenty-five branches: *prakṛiti*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, the five *tan-māṭra*, the five *mahā-bhūta*, the ten *indriya*, *manas*, *puruṣa*. (d) The two fruits: good and bad actions, or pleasures and pains. (e) The creeper: *māyā*.

selfishness as the blazing rays of the sun scatter the deep darkness of night.

'As a Kirāt pierces a deer with his arrow, so has Love vanquished the hearts of men with the weapon of lustful desire. Strike him, Lord Hari, and save thy wretched creatures, masterless and lost in the forest of carnal lust! Men have been afflicted with numberless diseases and the pains of bereavement, and all these come of contempt for thy feet; verily those who have no love for thy lotus feet are fallen into the bottomless ocean of birth and death.

'Yea, very wretched, melancholy and ever sorrowful are those who are not devoted to thy lotus feet; but those who make thy story their support ever hold dear those who are constant in goodness. They are free from inordinate affection, greed, arrogance and pride, and regard as one prosperity and adversity; and that is why sages ever abandon reliance on ascetic practice and gladly become thy servants. Unceasingly in purity of heart they wait upon thy lotus feet devoutly and with strict observance. Regarding contempt and respect as one, the saints all wander happily about the earth.

'O thou that hauntest the souls of sages as a bee the lotus! O Raghbir, mighty and unconquerable hero, I worship thee! Thy name I repeat, O Hari, and adore thee, potent remedy for the sickness of mortality and foe of pride! O highest home of goodness, loving-kindness and grace, I bow unceasingly before thee, Lakṣmi's lord! Destroy, O Raghunanda, the power of all the pairs! Sovereign of earth, look graciously upon thy lowly servant! [D. 14a.] Again and again I ask this boon—grant it with gladness, O Śrīraṅga—that I may never cease to worship thy lotus feet and may enjoy for ever the company of the saints!'

[14b.] After thus reciting Rāma's virtues, the lord of Uma returned with joy to Kailāsa. Then the Lord allotted to the monkeys all manner of pleasant abodes.

[C. 13.] Hearken, king of birds; this story makes men pure and frees them from every kind of ill and from the fear of rebirth. By hearing the blessed story of the great king's coronation men win to detachment and wisdom, and even those who are inspired by some selfish motive to listen to it or sing of it gain all sorts of happiness and prosperity; in this world they attain to bliss which gods may hardly know and at their end they go to Raghupati's realm. Those who have won release gain faith when they hear it, the detached gain final liberation and the carnal ever new prosperity. O king of birds, I have told to the best of my ability the

story of Rāma that banishes fear and sorrow; it is a story that confirms detachment, wisdom and devotion, a fair boat to carry men across the river of ignorance.

In the city of Kosala was ever some new festivity, and people of every class were happy. The love all bore to Rāma's lotus feet continually increased, those feet that Śiva and Brahmā and sages adore. Raiment was lavishly bestowed on beggars, and Brāhmaṇas received abundant gifts. [D. 15] The monkeys were all rapt in blissful ecstasy, devoted to the feet of their Lord; they heeded not the passing of the days, and thus six months were spent. [C. 14.] Their homes were forgotten; they never even dreamt of them, just as good men never think of harming others.

Then Raghupati called together all his friends; they came and reverently bowed their heads. With the utmost affection he seated them by his side and uttered gentle words to gladden his worshippers: 'Very great is the service you have done me; how can I praise you to your faces? For my sake you left your homes and every comfort; therefore you are most dear to me. My brother, my kingdom, my wealth and Sītā, my life, my home, my kinsfolk and my friends—all these are dear to me, but you are dearer still. I speak, as I always speak, in all sincerity. All love their servants—this is the common rule—but I feel a special affection for those who do me service. [D. 16.] Now, comrades all, go to your homes and worship me with constancy; and utterly devote yourselves to me as always present everywhere and friend of every creature.'

[C. 15.] When they heard the Lord's words, they were all entranced. They forgot who they were and where they were and lost all consciousness of self. They stood before him with folded hands and gazed earnestly upon him, so overpowered by love they could not say one word. When the Lord perceived their intense devotion, he did his best to comfort them with words of wisdom; they could make no reply in the Lord's presence, but again and yet again gazed at his lotus feet. Then the Lord ordered jewels and garments to be brought, matchless in beauty and of many hues; and first of all, Bharat with his own hands prepared a dress in which he clothed Sugriva. At the Lord's bidding Laksman dressed the king of Laṅkā, and Raghupati was greatly pleased; but Angad sat where he was and stirred not from his place, and the Lord, perceiving his devotion, did not summon him. [D. 17a.] Jāmbavān, Nila and all the rest Raghunāth invested, and laying Rāma's image on their hearts, they all bowed their heads before his feet and departed.

[17b.] Then Āngad arose and, bowing with folded hands and eyes full of tears, addressed him very humbly in words, as it were, steeped in devotion: [C. 16.] ‘Hearken, omniscient Lord of grace and bliss, merciful to the lowly, friend of the distressed! In the hour of death, Lord, Bāli entrusted me to your protection. Wherefore, O friend of those who worship you, remembering your role as refuge of the helpless, forsake me not! You are my Lord, my *guru*, my father and my mother; whither shall I go if I leave your lotus feet? Consider, O king, and tell me, what can I do at home if I part from my Lord? Shelter me then, O Lord, for I am but a child and have no wisdom, understanding or strength; shelter your humble servant! I am ready to do all the most menial housework if only I may gaze upon your lotus feet and so pass over the sea of birth and death.’ So saying, he fell at the feet of the Lord with the plea, ‘Command me not now, O Lord, to return to my home!’

[D. 18a.] When he heard Āngad’s humble prayer, Raghupati, Lord of perfect compassion, raised him and clasped him to his heart, and his lotus eyes were full of tears. [18b.] The Blessed Lord then placed about Bāli’s son raiment and jewels and the garland from his own breast and with many words of consolation bade him farewell. [C. 17.] In recognition of all that the votary had done, Bharat, Satrughna and Laksman went with him as escort. Āngad’s heart overflowed with love as again and again he turned and looked back at Rāma, repeatedly prostrating himself and hoping that even then Rāma would bid him stay. He dwelt continually with anxious longing on the way Rāma looked and spoke and walked and on his smiling embraces; but when he saw it was the Lord’s will, with many a humble prayer he laid upon his heart the lotus feet and set forth. Bharat and his brothers escorted all the monkeys with profound respect and returned.

Then Hanumān clasped Sugrīva’s feet and earnestly besought him: ‘After waiting upon Raghupati some ten days more I shall return, sire, to behold your feet.’ ‘O Son of the Wind,’ said Sugrīva, ‘great is your merit. Go then and do service to the Lord of all grace.’ Thereupon all the monkeys at once set forth; but Āngad said, [D. 19a.] ‘Hearken, Hanumān; offer my most humble reverence to the Lord, I entreat you with folded hands, and continually recall me to Raghuṇāyak’s memory.’ [19b.] With these words Bāli’s son departed, and Hanumān returned. He told the Lord of Āngad’s devotion, and the Blessed Lord was transported with delight.

[19c.] Rāma's heart, O king of birds, is harder far than a thunderbolt and softer than a flower; then tell me, who can understand it?

[C. 18.] Next, the merciful Lord summoned the Niśāda and graciously bestowed on him jewels and raiment, saying, 'Return to your home and meditate on me and follow after righteousness in thought and word and deed. You are my friend and my brother, even as Bharat; pay frequent visits to my city.' Guha was delighted to hear his words and fell at his feet with his eyes full of tears. Laying his lotus feet upon his heart, he came home and told his household of the Lord's loving-kindness; and the citizens, beholding Raghupati's acts, cried again and again, 'Blessed be he in whom is perfect bliss!'

When Rāma sat upon his sovereign throne, the three spheres rejoiced and there was no more sorrow. No man was any other's enemy, and under Rāma's royal influence all ill-feeling was laid aside.

[D. 20.] Everyone devoted himself to his duty in accordance with his caste and stage of life, and ever found happiness in treading the Vedic path. Fear and sorrow and sickness were no more.

[C. 19.] In Rāma's realm no one was troubled by bodily pain, ill fortune or evil circumstance. Every man loved his neighbour, walked in the path of his own duty and obeyed the injunctions of scripture. Piety with its four observances<sup>1</sup> prevailed throughout the world and no one ever dreamed of doing wrong. Men and women were Rāma's earnest votaries, all heirs of final release. None died young or suffered any pain; all were comely and healthy. No one was poor or sorrowful or distressed; no one was ignorant or lacked the marks of character or fortune. All the men and women were guileless, pious and upright, clever and accomplished; all recognized the virtues of others, all were wise and learned; all were grateful, none versed in deceit.

[D. 21.] Hearken, O king of birds; in Rāma's realm, of all that moves and moves not in the world, no creature suffered pain caused by time, past action, individual character or the elements of nature.

[C. 20.] Sole monarch of the land engirdled by seven seas was Raghupati in Kosala—no great dominion for him in each of whose several hairs dwelt many a universe. When one regards that greatness of the Lord, to describe this earthly majesty is very

<sup>1</sup> i.e., *satya, sauca, dayā, dāna*; or *tapa, jñāna, yajña, dāna*.

trivial. Yet, king of birds, he who has rightly understood that greatness takes supreme delight in these his acts. Delight in this divine sport is the fruit of that right understanding—so say the greatest ascetic sages. The bliss and prosperity of Rāma's realm neither Serpent King nor Sarasvatī can describe. All who dwelt therein were generous and charitable and did humble service to the Brāhmans. Each husband was true to one wife, and each wife was loyal to her husband in thought and word and deed.

[D. 22.] In Rāmacandra's realm the only rods were those in the hands of ascetics, the only differences were those of tune and measure in the dancers' troupes; the word 'conquer' was only heard to urge self-conquest.

[C. 21.] The trees in the forest always bore flowers and fruit; the elephant and the lion dwelt together; birds and beasts all forgot their natural enmities and lived in mutual harmony. Birds sang, and beasts of every kind wandered fearless through the forest in perfect happiness. Cool, fragrant and mild blew the breezes, and bees hummed as they gathered honey. Creepers and trees dropped honey at one's desire, and cows gave all the milk that one could wish. The earth was ever rich in crops; in this Tretāyuga were found all the blessings of the Kritayuga. The hills disclosed all kinds of jewel mines, knowing the Universal Spirit to be king of the world. In all the rivers flowed fair water, cool, pure, delicious and refreshing. The seas remained within their bounds; they cast jewels on the shore and men gathered them. All the ponds were thick with lotuses, and the whole country enjoyed perfect happiness.

[D. 23.] The moon bathed earth in radiance; the sun gave as much heat as was needed; the clouds shed rain as men desired in Rāmacandra's realm.

[C. 22.] The Lord sacrificed myriads of horses and gave countless gifts to Brāhmans; he preserved the Vedic way and was a pillar of the faith, himself transcending nature's elements, yet a very Indra in luxurious delights. Sītā was ever submissive to her lord, virtuous, modest and of perfect beauty. She recognized the majesty of the Lord of grace and did diligent service to his lotus feet. Though there were numberless menservants and handmaidens in the palace, all accomplished in the performance of their duties, she did the housework with her own hands and attended to Rāmacandra's orders. Any service that might please the gracious Lord Sītā herself skilfully performed. Kausalyā, too, and all the other queens she served within the palace and felt no pride or any loss of

dignity. Ever blameless, O Umā, is Sitā, Mother of the world, adored by Brahmā and the host of heaven! [D. 24] She whose gracious glance the gods desire—but she looks not towards them—forgot her high estate and practised this devotion to Rāma's lotus feet.

[C. 23.] All his brothers, too, did him obedient service, showing supreme devotion to Rāma's feet; and they were always watching his lotus face to see if perchance the gracious Lord had any orders to give. Rāma felt great affection for his brothers and gave them much moral instruction.

The people of the city lived very happily and all enjoyed delights to which the gods could scarce attain. Day and night they made their prayer to God, beseeching him to grant them devotion to the feet of the Lord Raghubir. Two handsome sons were born to Sitā, Lava and Kuśa, hymned in Veda and Purāna, both victorious, modest and accomplished and so beautiful that they seemed the very images of Hari. Each of his brothers also had two sons, very comely, accomplished and virtuous.

[D. 25.] He who is beyond knowledge, speech and sense-perception, the uncreated, transcending illusion, intellect and the elements of nature, the sum of True Being, Thought and Bliss, played the high part of a mortal man. [C. 24.] Early in the morning he would bathe in the Sarayū and take his seat in the council together with the Brāhmans and nobles. Vasīṣṭha would recite the Vedas and Purāṇas while Rāma listened though he knew them all. He took his meals with his younger brothers, while all the queens watched them with great delight. The two brothers, Bharat and Śatrughna, would go into the garden with the Son of the Wind and sitting there ask him to tell them the story of Rāma's gallant deeds, and Hanumān would repeat it with profoundest wisdom; and when they heard the tale of his stainless exploits, they were so delighted that they would beg him to recite it over and over again. In every single house the Purāṇas were read, and the various sacred stories of Rāma's acts. Men and women sang Rāma's praises and heeded not the passing of night and day.

[D. 26.] Not a thousand Śeṣas could describe the wondrous happiness and prosperity of those who dwelt in the city of Avadh where Rāma sat upon the throne.

[G. 25.] Every day Nārada and Sanaka and other high sages all came to Ayodhyā to see the king of Kosala, and when they saw the city, they forgot they were ascetics. There were balconies inlaid

with gold and jewels, with tessellated pavements of great beauty. All round the city were reared walls of wondrous charm, crowned with turrets of diverse hues, as though the nine planets had mustered an army to beleaguer Amarāvati. The ground was paved with many-coloured crystal, so lovely that great sages who saw it were bemused. On the gleaming palaces, so lofty that they touched the sky, stood pinnacles brighter than sun or moon; the lattice windows glittered, set close with jewels, and in every house shone gem-encrusted lamps.

[Ch. 7.] In the houses shone jewelled lamps, and their thresholds were bright with coral paving. The pillars of precious stone and golden walls inlaid with emeralds were such as the Creator himself might have fashioned. Spacious were the palaces and of entrancing beauty, and their courtyards were made charming with crystal work. In every gateway there were doors of gold, their panels set with diamonds.

[D. 27.] In every house was a beautiful picture-gallery, where the story of Rāma's deeds was so skilfully limned as to ravish the souls of the sages who saw it. [C. 26.] Everyone had a garden planted with flowers of all varieties and arranged with the greatest care, beautified with every kind of lovely creeper, ever blossoming as though it were spring. Bees hummed melodiously and grateful breezes always blew, cool, soft and fragrant. Children kept all sorts of birds as pets; sweet were their songs and graceful their flight. On the tops of the houses were charming flocks of peacocks, swans, cranes and doves, everywhere uttering their varied notes and dancing at the sight of their own shadows. Children were teaching parrots and *mainās* to say 'Rāma' and 'Raghupati' and 'Saviour'. Wondrously beautiful were the palace gates, and the streets and squares and market-places were magnificent.

[Ch. 8.] Unutterably beautiful were the market-places where wares were offered beyond price. How can one tell of the wealth of the city where Sitā's lord was king? Cloth-merchants, money-changers and other tradesmen sat at their stalls like so many Kuveras; men, women, young and old—all were happy and honest and fair to see.

[D. 28.] To the north flowed the Sarayū with its deep and limpid water; it was bordered by a row of splendid steps, and there was no mud at all upon its banks. [C. 27.] Some distance away was a handsome *ghāṭ* where horses and elephants came in numbers to drink; there was also a number of very charming *ghāṭs* where

women drew water and men were not allowed to bathe. Most beautiful of all was the royal *ghāt*, where men of all the four castes could bathe; and all along the banks were temples of the gods, surrounded by lovely gardens. Here and there on the river banks dwelt solitaries, hermits and anchorites in constant pursuit of knowledge, and all along the margins were numbers of sweet *tulasi* shrubs, planted by sages. Not only was the beauty of the city beyond description but the suburbs too were incomparably lovely. The very sight of the city with its groves and gardens and wells and ponds was enough to put to flight all sin.

[Ch. 9.] Its matchless reservoirs and ponds and broad and beautiful wells with their elegant flights of steps and their pellucid water so pleased the eye that gods and sages were enchanted by the sight. The many-coloured lotuses, the cooing of innumerable birds and the murmur of the bees made the garden an entrancing spot where cuckoos and other birds with their sweet notes seemed to invite wayfarers to rest. [D. 29.] Can that city be described where Sītā's lord was king? Aṇimā<sup>1</sup> and all the supernatural powers were filling Avadh full of gladness and prosperity.

[C. 28.] Everywhere men were singing Raghupati's excellences, and sitting down together would thus urge one another: 'Worship Rāma, protector of the suppliant, in whom all glory, loving-kindness, beauty and virtue dwell; the lotus-eyed and dark of hue, who guards his servants as the eyelid guards the eye; who bears the beauteous bow and arrows and quiver, valiant, a sun to quicken the lotus bed of righteous men; a king of birds to swallow up the fierce serpent, Death; who banishes all thought of self<sup>2</sup> from those who worship Rāma without desire; a Kirāt to hunt like deer the herds of greed and ignorance; a lion to subdue the elephant, Love; the bringer of joy to the faithful; a sun to scatter the thick darkness of doubt and grief; a fire to burn up the dense forest of demons. Why not worship Janak's daughter and Raghubir, who frees men from the fear of rebirth, and slays the many sensual desires as frost a swarm of mosquitoes; ever one in essence, unborn, indestructible; who gladdens the sage and frees earth from its burdens; the beautiful Lord of Tulasi Dās?"

[D. 30] Thus did the men and women of the city sing the praise of

<sup>1</sup> See note on B.C. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *mamatā jahi*: so the *fikā*, taking *jahi* from *jahnā*, to destroy. Interpretations vary.

Rāma's virtues, and the Lord of grace continually extended his favour to them all.

[C. 29.] O king of birds, from the day when the brilliant sun of Rāma's majesty arose, the three spheres were filled with radiance. To many this brought joy and to many sorrow. Now I tell of those who were sorrowful. First, the night of ignorance was dispelled; the owls of sin sought where to hide themselves, and lust and passion withered like lilies. All kinds of action, the elements of nature, time and individualism—these were partridges that found no peace; envy, pride, folly and conceit are thieves, and they had no outlet for their artfulness. But on the pools of righteousness blossomed the varied lotuses of wisdom and mystic intuition; and joy, contentment, continence and discretion—all these were *cakavās* that knew no more sorrow. [D. 31] When the sun of Rāma's majesty illumines a man's heart, these latter qualities increase in him and the former fade away.

[C. 30.] One day Rāma and his brothers together with their most beloved Son of the Wind went out to visit a beautiful garden, where all the trees were blossoming and putting forth new leaves. Sanaka and his brother sages seized the opportunity to come, a glorious band of virtuous saints ever absorbed in celestial bliss, children in appearance but of immemorial years. It seemed as though the four Vedas had taken human form; impartial sages were they who knew no distinctions; the sky was their clothing, and they cherished this one ambition, to be where Raghupati's acts were recited and there to hear them. Sanaka and the rest, Bhavāni, had been with the great and learned sage Agastya, who had told them the story of Rāma at length, the source of true wisdom as the fire-stick is the source of fire.

[D. 32] When Rāma saw the sages approaching, he was glad and prostrated himself before them. The Lord welcomed them and gave them his own yellow robe to sit on. [C. 31] His three brothers, and Hanumān too, prostrated themselves with rapturous delight, and the sages, as they gazed on Raghupati's peerless beauty, fell into an ecstatic trance. They fixed their unwinking gaze on the dark-hued form and the lotus eyes of the shrine of beauty, saviour from rebirth, while the Lord bowed before them with folded hands. At the sight of their emotion Raghupati's eyes streamed with tears and he felt a thrill of rapture. Then the Lord took the great sages by the hand and seated them and spoke to them in very gracious accents: 'Hearken, noble sages; blest am I this day, for the

sight of you blots out all sins. Great good fortune is it to enjoy the company of the good, for it brings to an end without effort the round of birth and death. [D. 33] The fellowship of the saints is the road to liberation; the fellowship of the lustful is the road to rebirth; so declare saints and poets and scholars, the Vedas and the Purāṇas and all holy books.'

[C. 32.] The four sages rejoiced to hear the Lord's words, and trembling with emotion they sang his praises: 'Glory to the Blessed Lord, infinite and immutable, sinless, one and many, the compassionate! Glory to the impersonal! Glory, glory to the ocean of perfections! Thou art the shrine of bliss, beautiful and most wise! Glory to Lakṣmi's lord! Glory to the world's support! Incomparable art thou, uncreated and from everlasting, the very source of beauty. In thee is all wisdom stored; thou takest no honour to thyself but givest it to others; Purāṇa and Veda tell of thy stainless glory. Essential truth thou knowest and the service that men do thee; thou dost banish ignorance, O passionless, thou of many names and none! All and in all, thou dwellest in the hearts of all. Be thou ever our protector! Break thou the bonds of the pairs and of all trouble and the meshes of birth and death! Dwell in our hearts, O Rāma, and destroy our lust and pride!

[D. 34.] 'O perfect bliss, O home of grace, who satisfiest the soul's desires, grant unto us, Lord Rāma, devotion and unwavering faith!

[C. 33.] Bestow on us, O Raghupati, that sanctifying faith which banishes every pain and the sorrows of rebirth. O cow of plenty and tree of Paradise, ready to grant thy suppliants' desires, be gracious unto us and grant us, Lord, this boon! O Raghunāyak, an Agastya to swallow up the sea of birth and death, thy servants find thee easy to approach, giver of joy to all! Banish, O friend of the lowly, the grievous woes the mind is heir to and grant us the impartial eye! Thou savest men from wrong desire and fear and jealousy and other evil passions; meekness thou fosterest in men and wisdom and detachment. O crown of kings and jewel of the earth, grant us that faith which is a boat to carry us across the river of rebirth!

'O thou who ever dwellest in the sage's soul like a swan on the holy lake, thy lotus feet are worshipped by Brahmā and Śāmkara; thou art the Banner of the house of Raghu, the guardian of the Vedic bounds; thou dost destroy time, destiny, individual character and the elements of nature; thou art the saviour; thou blottest out all sin, O jewel of the three worlds, Lord of Tulasi Dās!'

[D. 35.] Again and again Sanaka and the other sages devoutly sang his praises, then bowed and departed to Brahmā's realm, having won the boon they most desired.

[C. 34.] When the four sages had departed to Brahmā's realm, Rāma's brothers bowed their heads before his feet. They all hesitated to put a question to the Lord and looked towards the Son of the Wind. They wished to hear from the Lord's own lips a lesson which would resolve all their doubts. The Lord who knows the secrets of all hearts perceived their thoughts and said, 'Tell me, Hanumān, what is it?' Then Hanumān replied with folded hands, 'Hearken, Blessed Lord, compassionate to the humble; Bharat, Lord, desires to ask you something, but is diffident about putting the question.' 'You know my nature, monkey,' said the Lord; 'are there any secrets between Bharat and myself?'

When he heard the Lord's reply, Bharat clasped his feet and said,

[D. 36.] 'Hear me, Lord, reliever of your suppliants' distress! Lord, I have no doubts at all nor any anxiety or perplexity whatever; and this is all of your grace, O Lord of perfect mercy and bliss.

[C. 35.] But if I may presume in one matter, gracious Lord—for I am your servant and you are kind to the faithful—the Vedas and the Purāṇas, Raghurāī, have said much in praise of the saints and you too have magnified them with your blessed lips, for they are very dear to my Lord. I would hear, Lord, their special characteristics, for you, O Lord of grace, have insight into character and wisdom. Instruct me, O protector of the suppliant, in the several qualities that distinguish the saint from the sinner.'

'Hear then, brother, the numberless marks of the saint, as recorded in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. The behaviour of the saint and the sinner resembles the conduct of the sandal-tree and the axe; for the axe cuts down the tree, but—mark it, brother—the sandal sheds its natural fragrance on the axe. [D. 37.] Wherefore sandal is placed upon the heads of gods and is beloved in this world too, while the blade of the axe is heated in the fire and well hammered; this is its punishment.'

[C. 36.] 'Indifferent to carnal delights, kindly and virtuous, sorrowing when they see another's sorrow and rejoicing in another's joy, equable, the enemy of none, void of pride and passion, abandoning greed and intolerance, exultation and fear, tender-hearted and merciful to the poor, unfeignedly devoted to my person in thought and word and deed, honouring all and caring not for their own dignity—such people, Bharat, are to me as my own life. Naught they

desire; they think of nothing but my name; in them dwell peace and continence, humility and joy. They are contented, simple, friendly, serving the feet of Brāhmans with a devotion that brings forth righteousness. Regard him, brother, in whose heart all these marks are found as always and truly a saint. Such swerve not from self-control and continence and strict observance of the moral law. [D. 38.] They never speak a harsh word; praise and blame are all one to them, and they love my lotus feet. Such good men are dear to me as life itself, abodes of virtue and all compact of bliss. [C. 37.] 'Hear now the characteristics of sinners, with whom one should have no communion whatever, for their company always brings sorrow in its train, as when a vicious cow spoils its gentle companion. The heart of the wicked is ever ablaze; they burn with envy at the sight of another's prosperity, and whenever they hear another slandered, they are as happy as if they had come on treasure lying in the road. They devote themselves to lust and wrath and pride and greed; they are cruel, deceitful, perverse and utterly foul. They pick causeless quarrels with everyone and return evil for good; false about receipts and false about disbursements, false about meals and false about parched gram.<sup>1</sup> They speak you soft but are cruel at heart, like the peacock that sings so sweetly and devours large snakes. [D. 39.] They are bent on injuring others, they covet their neighbours' wives and wealth and slander them; such men are base and sinful, demons in human form.'

[C. 38.] 'Covetousness is their dress and covetousness their bed; lechery and gluttony their only aims. They have no fear of hell, and when they hear of anyone's advancement, they heave deep sighs as though they had the fever. But when they see anyone in trouble, they are as delighted as though they were kings of the earth. Utterly selfish, quarrelsome among their kinsfolk, dissolute, greedy and prone to wrath, they pay no respect to mother, father, *guru* or Brāhmaṇ. They are lost themselves and drag down others with them. In their folly they injure their neighbours and hate the fellowship of saints and the stories of Hari. Oceans of vice, insensate, lustful, critics of the Veda, claiming a right to the property of others, doing all the harm they can to Brāhmans or any others,

<sup>1</sup> This obscure verse is thus interpreted by the *pīkū*: 'they deceive others in matters of business, or falsely boast that they have made a lot of money and given thousands in charity; also, they eat a frugal meal of gram and pretend they have enjoyed a banquet, or eat gram and falsely explain that they have taken a vow of abstinence.'

hypocritical and treacherous at heart but outwardly fair-seeming [D. 40.]—such vile and wicked men are not to be found in the Kṛita or the Tretāyuga; some few there are in the Dvāpara, and there will be numbers of them in the Kaliyuga.

[C. 39.] ‘Brother, there is no religious duty like doing good to others, no vileness like doing them harm. This, dear brother, is the doctrine of Veda and Purāṇa that I have disclosed to you, and the learned know it well. Those who in the body cause suffering to others must always live in deadly terror of rebirth; and those who in their folly commit many sins with an eye to their own interests lose their hope of heaven. To such, brother, I am Doom; I apportion the fruit of good and evil deeds. Those who are very wise remember this, and knowing as they do that the world is but sorrow, worship me. They give up action that bears good or evil fruit and worship only me, the Lord of gods and men and sages. Thus have I described the qualities of saints and sinners, and those who fully understand them fall not into the toils of birth and death.

[D. 41.] ‘Hearken, brother; it is illusion that is responsible for all good qualities and bad; it is best to regard neither; to regard them is unwisdom.’

[G. 40.] When they heard this lesson from Rāma’s holy lips, his brothers all rejoiced, nor could their hearts contain their love. Again and again they did him humble reverence, and Hanumān too was filled with boundless delight. Then Raghupati went to his own palace; and every day he performed some such action anew. Nārada the sage constantly came and sang of Rāma’s holy deeds; and ever as the sage witnessed new acts to relate, he went to Brahmā’s realm and told the whole story. The Creator took great delight in the recital and urged the seer to repeat the song of praise over and over again. Sanaka and his brother sages praised Nārada, and although they were anchorites devoted to the pursuit of mystic wisdom, when they heard the story of Rāma’s virtues, they awoke from their contemplative trance and listened reverently. It was their highest privilege.<sup>1</sup>

[D. 42.] When saints released while yet alive, intent upon the Absolute, turn from their contemplation to listen to the tale, how stony-hearted must those be who take no delight in the story of Hari!

<sup>1</sup> *parama adhikāri*: so the *rīkā*, referring *adhikāri* to *sanakādi*. Some interpret: ‘the highest powers listened reverently.’

[C. 41.] One day the *guru* and the Brāhmans and all the citizens came together at Raghunāth's summons, and when his noble guests—the *guru*, the sages and the Brāhmans—had taken their seats, he who saves the faithful from rebirth addressed them thus:

'Give ear to my words, all ye who dwell in the city ! I have no selfish motive in what I am about to say. I seek not to disparage you nor to exalt myself. Listen and act upon my words if they seem good to you. He is my servant, he is most dear to me who does my bidding; if I say aught that seems discourteous, my brothers, then check me without fear.

'It is great good fortune to be born as a man, a blessing scarcely to be won by the gods, as all the sacred books declare. The human body is an instrument for pious practices, it is the gateway to deliverance; and those who have been born as men and still have not won heaven suffer torment in the next world, [D. 43.] and beating their heads in vain remorse, falsely assign the blame to fate and destiny and God.

[C. 42.] 'The object of human life, my friends, is not the enjoyment of material things; why, even the joys of heaven are short-lived and end in pain. Those born as men who devote themselves to sensual delights are fools who would drink poison in exchange for nectar. No one will ever speak well of a man who neglects the philosopher's stone and picks up a worthless seed. Such a creature wanders endlessly through forty-eight lakhs of lives by the four modes of birth, ever drifting under the influence of illusion and encompassed by time and fate, individualism and the elements of nature. Sometimes God, who is kind to the undeserving, of his compassion gives him a human body, a boat to carry him across the ocean of mortality, sped by the favouring wind of my grace; good teachers steer the course of this strong boat, and thus he easily obtains the means to cross which are so hard to win.'

[D. 44.] 'Whoever crosses not the ocean of birth and death, though he finds such means as these, is an ungrateful, insensate and suicidal wretch.'

[C. 43.] 'If you would find happiness in this world and the next, hearken to my words and store them deeply in your hearts. The way of devotion to me, my brothers, is an easy path and leads to bliss—so say the Purānas and the Vedas; the way of knowledge is hard to pursue and there are many obstacles; the means thereto are difficult and there is no sure footing for the mind; and though with infinite trouble a man should find it, yet is he not dear

to me if he lack faith. Faith is free and altogether blissful, yet cannot men win it without the fellowship of saints; the saints are not won without deeds of merit; it is their fellowship that brings this mortal round to its completion. There is one deed of merit in the world, no other—in thought and word and deed to worship the feet of Brāhmans; he who with unfeigned devotion serves the feet of Brāhmans finds favour with gods and sages.

[D. 45.] 'There is one more cryptic doctrine that with folded hands I now reveal to all. No man can win to faith in me who fails to worship Śāmkara.

[C. 44.] 'Tell me, what difficulty is there in treading the way of faith? There is no need of austerity or sacrifice, prayer, penance or fasting; nothing but a simple nature and an honest soul and perfect contentment whatever may befall. If any call himself my servant and put confidence in man, tell me, what trust has he in me? But why should I discourse at greater length? These, my brothers, are the principles of conduct that win my favour; to bear no grudge, to pick no quarrel, to hope for nothing and fear nought. For such a man the whole world is ever a world of bliss; he who strives not with a motive, not too much attached to home, humble, virtuous, even-tempered, clever, versed in spiritual things; he who loves constantly to consort with the good, who cares not a straw for worldly delights, nay, even for heaven or final release; persevering in faith and innocent of folly, holding aloof from all contentious arguments, [D. 46.] devoted to my perfections and my name, knowing no selfishness or pride or vanity—such an one's bliss only he himself can comprehend, the sum of perfect happiness.'

[C. 45.] When they heard Rāma's ambrosial words, they all clasped the feet of the Lord of grace and said, 'You, O gracious Lord, are our mother and our father, our *guru* and our brother, dearer to us than life itself; you, O Rāma, are our selves, our property, our homes, our never-failing friend, the suppliant's comforter! No one but yourself could give us such instruction; even a mother and a father look to their own interests. O foe of demons, there are but two disinterested benefactors in the world—yourself and one who is your servant. Every friend in the world thinks first of self and never, Lord, dreams of thinking of the highest.'

When Raghunāth heard them all speak so affectionately, he was overjoyed. They then took leave and returned each to his own home, discoursing of the Lord's gracious converse.

[D. 47.] O Umā, those who dwelt at Avadh, both men and women, were supremely blest, for there reigned Raghusūkya, True Being, Thought and Bliss, the Absolute.

[C. 46.] One day the sage Vasiṣṭha came to visit Rāma, the glorious home of bliss. Raghusūkya received him with profound respect and washed his feet and drank of the water. ‘O Rāma,’ said the sage with folded hands, ‘graciously hear my prayer. As I witness from time to time your actions, a boundless perplexity possesses my soul. Immeasurable is your greatness; not even the Vedas comprehend it; then how can I speak of it, Blessed Lord? The duties of a family priest are very despicable; the Vedas and Purāṇas and other scriptures treat them with contempt. When I refused the office, Brahmā said to me, “It will be well for you in the end, my son. The Supreme Spirit, the Absolute in human form, will be the king, the jewel of the house of Raghu.”’

[D. 48.] ‘Then I thought to myself that if I found him for whose sake contemplation, sacrifice, vows and almsgiving are practised, there could be no higher office than this, [C. 47.] and that there was but one great reward for the performance of all the religious duties ordained by scripture and the saints—prayer, penance, the observance of ascetic rules, contemplation and the practice of one’s own caste-duty, and the many pious works that scripture inculcates, the pursuit of knowledge, mercy and self-control, bathing at sacred places, the reading and hearing of the Vedas and Āgamas and Purāṇas, and that the glorious fruit of all these practices was unceasing devotion, Lord, to your lotus feet. Can dirt be got rid of by cleansing with dirt? Can one produce ghī by churning water? So, Raghurāj, only by the water of love and faith can the inner man be cleansed of its defilement. He is the man of perfect wisdom, the learned doctor versed in essential truth, he is the virtuous man whose mystic knowledge is entire, expert and possessed of every mark of character and fortune, who loves your lotus feet.’

[D. 49.] ‘Lord, there is one boon I crave; graciously grant it, O Rāma! Let my love for my Lord’s lotus feet never grow less as life succeeds to life!’

[C. 48.] So saying, the sage Vasiṣṭha returned home, and the gracious Lord was greatly pleased. Then, taking with him Hanumān, Bharat and his other brothers, the Lord of mercy, who brings joy to his servants, went outside the city and ordered elephants, chariots and horses to be brought. He reviewed them and graciously praised them all, and then fittingly distributed them, giving each

person the one he desired. The Lord who relieves the weariness of all himself grew weary and sought the cool shade of a mango grove. There Bharat spread his own robe for him to sit on. The Lord took his seat and all his brothers waited on him, while the Son of the Wind fanned him, trembling with emotion and with eyes full of tears. None, O Girijā, so blest as Hanumān, none so devoted to Rāma's feet! How often has the Lord with his own lips lauded his loving service!

[D. 50.] At that moment came Nārada the sage, lute in hand, and began to sing Rāma's fair renown, unfading theme:

[C. 49.] 'O Lotus-eyed, who by thy gracious glance dost rid men of their cares, look thou on me! O Hari, dark as the dark-blue lotus, sipping like a bee the honey of the lotus of Siva's heart! Thou didst break the power of the demon host; thou gladdenest sages and saints and destroyest sin; thou blessest the Brāhmans, as rain-clouds the new-sprung crops. O helper of the helpless and refuge of thy humble servants, by the might of thine arm thou dost relieve earth of her grievous burdens. Skilled slayer of Khara, Dūṣaṇa and Virādha, foe of Rāvan, very bliss, noblest of kings, glory to thee, O moon to the lily of the house of Daśarath! Thy glorious fame is known to the Purāṇas, the Vedas and the Āgamas. Gods, sages and saints unite in hymning it. Compassionate art thou, destroyer of falsehood and pride, altogether wise, jewel of Kosala! Thy name cleanseth the Kaliyuga of all defilement and bringeth to an end the love of self. Save now thy suppliant servant, O Lord of Tulasi Dās!'

[D. 51.] Having devoutly sung the whole of Rāma's virtues, Nārada the sage departed to Brahmā's realm, laying the ocean of beauty on his heart.

[C. 50.] Hearken, O Girijā; I have told you the whole of this glorious story to the best of my ability. A thousand million are the acts of Rāma, nay, infinite in number; scripture and Śāradā cannot tell them all. Rāma is infinite, and infinite his excellent perfections; his births and deeds and names are infinite. Drops of water may be numbered or the particles of earth's dust, but there is no end to the telling of the acts of Raghupati. This sacred story leads to Hari's highest sphere and the hearing of it inspires unwavering faith. O Umā, I have related the whole of the marvellous story that Bhuśundi recited to the king of the birds. I have told you something of Rāma's virtues; now say, Bhavānī, what else shall I recount?

Umā was delighted with the recital of the blessed tale, and in very humble tones she gently replied, 'Thrice blessed am I, Purāri, to have heard the story of Rāma's excellences that free men from the dread of rebirth. [D. 52a.] Now by your grace, O Lord of grace, I am well satisfied and no more bewildered; for I have learnt the mighty power of Rāma, the Lord who is the sum of all intelligence and bliss. [52b.] Your lips, Lord, flow with the story of Raghubīr as the moon with nectar; and my soul never tires of drinking it in through the cups of my ears, O resolute of purpose! [C. 51.] Those who weary of hearing of Rāma's acts have not experienced their special savour. Even those great sages who have won release while yet alive constantly listen to the praise of Hari's virtues. The story of Rāma is a safe boat to ferry across the sea of birth and death those who would reach the further shore. To the worldly, too, the hearing of Rāma's perfections brings joy and delights their hearts. Who is there in the world who has ears to hear to whom the acts of Raghupati give no pleasure? Those who take no delight in Raghupati's story are fools, creatures bent on their own destruction. Lord, you have sung the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts and measureless has been my pleasure in the hearing; but inasmuch as you said that Kākabhuśundi related this wondrous story to Garur, [D. 53.] I am greatly perplexed that one in the body of a crow should possess such detachment and knowledge and mystic wisdom, such intense devotion to Rāma's feet and such faith in Raghupati.

[C. 52.] 'Hearken, Purāri; among a thousand men there may perhaps be one who is strictly religious; and among millions of the pious but one who has turned his back on the world and given himself to detachment; among millions of such ascetics—so say the Vedas—only one attains to perfect knowledge; and among millions of those who know, perhaps one in the world may win release before he dies; and among a thousand such, all in a state of perfect bliss, hard is it to find one who, rapt in mystic ecstasy, is one with the Absolute; harder to find than all of these—the pious, the detached, the wise, the liberated and those absorbed in the Absolute—is he, O Lord of gods, who has lost all pride and delusion and devotes himself to the worship of Rāma. Tell me, Viśvanāth, how did a crow win to such faith in Hari? [D. 54.] Tell me, Lord, why did one so devoted to Rāma, so intent on wisdom, so virtuous and resolute, inhabit the body of a crow? [C. 53.] Tell me, gracious Lord, where did the crow learn of these holy and glorious

acts of the Lord? Tell me, too, O foe of Love, how came you to hear them? I am full of curiosity. And how was it that Garur, a bird of the profoundest wisdom and highest excellence, a servant of Hari and always so close to him, neglected the sages and went to a crow to hear the story? Tell me, what sort of conversation was there between the two votaries of Hari, the crow and Garur?

Śiva was pleased with Gauri's simple and charming questions and courteously replied:

*The Story of Garur*

Blessed are you, O Satī, for your thoughts are pure and your love for Raghupati's feet profound. Now listen to the very sacred story, the hearing of which puts an end to universal doubt and brings to birth trust in the feet of Rāma, whereby men cross most easily the sea of birth and death. [D. 55.] It was those very questions that the king of birds put to the crow. I shall reverently explain the whole matter, and do you, Umā, listen attentively.

[C. 54.] Hear now, O fair of face and bright of eye, how it came about that I heard the story that frees men from rebirth. In former days you became incarnate in the house of Dakṣa, and at that time you were named Satī. At a sacrifice performed by Dakṣa you were insulted and in a fit of passion yielded up your life. My servants then broke up the sacrifice—but you know all this story already. Then my heart was very heavy and I mourned your loss, my beloved; and I wandered about, seeing indeed the beauteous woods and hills and rivers and lakes but indifferent to their beauty. Far away, to the north of Mount Sumeru, there is a very lovely purple mountain with majestic golden peaks, four of them, that charmed and pleased my soul; and on each peak is a spreading tree, one banyan, one *pipala*,<sup>1</sup> one *pākara*,<sup>2</sup> and one mango. On the top of the mountain is a lake of wondrous beauty with jewelled flights of steps, an entrancing sight to see. [D. 56.] Its water is cool, clear and sweet, covered with many-coloured lotuses, and there swans utter melodious notes and bees softly murmur.

[C. 55.] On this beautiful mountain dwelt that bird, imperishable aeon after aeon. All those merits and defects that are born of illusion, ignorance and lust and other forms of folly which influence the whole world by their pervading presence, never come nigh that mountain. Listen now, O Umā, devoutly while I explain how the crow dwelt there and worshipped Hari.

<sup>1</sup> *Ficus religiosa*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ficus infectoria*.

Beneath the *pipala* tree he practised contemplation, and beneath the *pākara* the sacrifice of prayer; in the shade of the mango tree he practised mental ritual, making the worship of Hari his one concern; beneath the banyan he recited the story of Hari's exploits, and numbers of birds came and listened while he recounted every detail of Rāma's marvellous acts with reverence and devotion. All the pure-souled swans that continually abode upon that lake listened to his lay. When I marked the spot and saw the wondrous scene, there arose in my heart intense delight. [D. 57.] Thereafter I abode there for some time in the form of a swan, and after reverently listening to the story of Raghupati's virtues, returned to Kailāsa.

[C. 56.] I have told you, Girijā, the whole story of the occasion on which I visited the bird. Now listen while I tell you why the chief of the race of birds went to see the crow.

When Raghunāth was playing at war—and the very memory of this incident makes me feel ashamed—he allowed himself to be bound by Indrajit, and Nārada the sage sent down Garuḍ, who cut the bonds and returned. But there arose in his heart a profound melancholy. Pondering on the binding of the Lord, the enemy of snakes thought about it and about: 'True, I have heard there has been born incarnate in the world the all-pervading Absolute, passionless, Lord of speech, God Supreme, transcending illusion and ignorance, but I have seen in him no special power whatever.' [D. 58.] If a miserable demon has bound him in serpent coils, can that be Rāma, by the repetition of whose name men are set free from the bonds of birth and death?

[C. 57.] He did his best to reassure himself, but he could not understand it and his soul was clouded with bewilderment. Distracted with grief, he became more and more critical and a prey to perplexity, just as you were yourself. In his distress he went to the divine seer and unfolded the doubts he was harbouring in his mind. Nārada had compassion on him when he heard them and said, 'Hearken, bird; Rāma's power of illusion is very great, for it robs even wise men of their wits and renders their souls slaves to delusion, yes, and many a time it has made a puppet of me too; and that, king of birds, is what has influenced you. A powerful delusion has arisen in your soul, O bird, and nothing I can say will easily resolve it. Go then, king of birds, to Brahmā and do whatever he tells you.' [D. 59.] With these words the divine seer departed, singing the

praises of Rāma's virtues and in his perfect wisdom repeatedly proclaiming the power of Hari's illusion.

[C. 58.] Then the king of birds went to the Creator and told him his doubts; and when he heard them, Brahmā bowed his head to Rāma, and as he thought on his great power, he was filled with devotion and reflected, 'Poets, scholars, and wise men are subject to illusion; limitless is the influence of Hari's magic power, which often and often has made me dance to its tune; yet all creation is my work—no wonder, then, that the king of birds is bemused!' Then Brahmā spoke words of comfort: 'Maheśa comprehends the sovereign power of Rāma. Go then, Garur, to Śaṅkara and put no question to anyone elsewhere, my son. There will your doubts be resolved.' The bird went his way in obedience to Brahmā's command.

[D. 60.] With anxious speed the king of birds drew near to me, just when I was going to Kuvera's palace and you, Umā, were at Kailāsa. [C. 59.] He bowed his head reverently before my feet and then explained his doubts; and I replied thus lovingly, Bhavāni, to his humble and piteous plea: 'Garur, you have met me on the road; how can I give you instruction? Doubt can only be completely resolved when the fellowship of the saints has been enjoyed for a considerable time. In their company the glorious story of Hari must be heard, which sages have sung in many ways and wherein the adorable and blessed Lord Rāma is the beginning, the middle and the end. So, brother, I send you to a place where Hari's story is ever being told. Go there and listen to it. When you hear it, all your doubts will be resolved and great will be your love for Rāma's feet.'

[D. 61.] 'Only among the saints can the story of Hari be heard, and not till that be heard will delusion take to flight; and only when delusion is dispelled can one experience unwavering devotion to Rāma's feet. [C. 60.] Without such devotion Raghupati is not won, whether by contemplation or prayer or knowledge or austerity.

'In the north there rises a beautiful purple mountain, where dwells the virtuous Kākabhuśundi, highly skilled in the way of faith in Rāma, wise and accomplished and very old. He unceasingly repeats the story of Rāma and all sorts of noble birds listen with reverence. Go there and listen to the tale of Hari's many virtues; so shall your sadness born of delusion vanish.'

When I had thus fully directed him, he bowed his head before my feet and went on his way rejoicing. The reason, Umā, why I

did not myself instruct him was that by Raghupati's grace I had fathomed the mystery of his doubts. He must at some time have shown pride, and the gracious Lord desired to cure him of it; and partly for this reason too I did not keep him with me that, being a bird, he understood the speech of birds.

All-powerful, O Bhavāni, is the illusion of the Lord! What man is there so wise that it leads him not astray? [D. 62a.] Garuḍ is wise, chiefest of votaries, and bears upon his back the Lord of the three worlds. When illusion can beguile such an one, shall miserable man make boast? [62b.] And when it misleads even Śiva and Brahmā, then what of any other wretched creature? Thus pondering, do sages worship the Blessed Lord of illusion.

[C. 61.] Garuḍ went to the spot where dwelt Bhuśundi, that bird of keen intelligence and perfect faith in Hari; and when he saw the mountain, his soul rejoiced, and illusion, perplexity and care all disappeared. After bathing in the lake and drinking of its water, he went under the banyan with happy heart, and to that spot came flocks of aged birds to hear the wondrous story of Rāma's acts. The crow was just about to begin his recital when the king of birds arrived, and when they saw Garuḍ arriving, the crow and the whole company of birds were very glad. He received the king of birds with great respect, asked him how he fared and offered him an honourable seat; then, doing him loving reverence, the crow addressed him courteously: [D. 63a.] 'O king of birds, the sight of you, my lord, has satisfied all my desires. Now give me your commands that I may do your will. Why have you come here, lord?'

[63b.] 'What need have you of satisfaction?' replied Garuḍ in gentle tones. 'For with his own lips Maheśa has reverently sung your praises. [C. 62.] Hearken, father; the object with which I came was attained as soon as I saw you; for no sooner did I behold your pure retreat than all my delusion, doubts and errors fled. Now, father, recite for me reverently the sanctifying story of the Lord Rāma that ever brings joy and banishes a multitude of sorrows; insistently, lord, I entreat you to do so.'

When he heard Garuḍ's humble petition, so simple, devoted, pleasant and pure, the crow was filled with supreme delight and thus began to sing the story of Raghupati's excellent exploits.

First of all, Bhavāni, he explained with the utmost devotion the meaning of the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts. Then he told the story of Nārada's amazing infatuation and of Rāvan's birth as a

demon. Next, he told of the incarnation of the Lord and recounted in careful detail his doings as a child. [D. 64.] With a heart full of rapture he related all his various childish deeds, then told of the coming of the seer and the marriage of the Lord Raghubir. [C. 63.] Next, he recounted the preparations for Rāma's coronation, and how the rejoicings at his enthronement were cut short by the king's promise; the citizens' despair at their bereavement and the conversation between Rāma and Laksman; the journey to the forest, the devotion of the boatman, the crossing of the Gaṅgā and the stay at Prayāga. He told, too, of the meeting of the Lord with Valmiki, and how the Blessed Lord abode at Citrakūṭa. He told of the minister's return to the city and the death of the king, and of Bharat's return and the devotion he displayed; how Bharat performed the king's obsequies and then went with the citizens to visit the all-blessed Lord. Next, he related how Raghupati did all he could to console him and how he returned to the city of Avadh with the sandals; Bharat's manner of life, the mischief wrought by Indra's son and the Lord's meeting with Atri.

[D. 65.] He told of the slaying of Virādha and how Śarabhaṅga quitted the body; then of Sutikṣpa's devotion and the Lord's holy communion with Agastya. [C. 64.] After telling how the forest of Dāṇḍaka was rid of its impurity, he went on to sing of Rāma's friendship with the vulture and of how the Lord dwelt at Pañcavati and freed all the hermits from their fears. Next, he repeated the marvellous instruction given to Laksman and described how Rāma spoilt Śūrpaṇakhā's beauty; then the slaying of Khara and Dūṣaṇa and how the Ten-headed learnt all that had occurred. He told in detail of Rāvaṇa's conversation with Mārīca, then of the rape of the illusory Sītā and somewhat of the Lord Raghubir's grief at her loss; next, how the Lord performed the vulture's funeral rites, slew Kabandha and granted the Śavari final liberation; then how Raghubir came to the shore of the lake, mourning his loss.

[D. 66a.] Next, he repeated the Lord's conversation with Nārada and the story of his meeting with the Son of the Wind, and told of his alliance with Sugriva and the slaughter of Bāli. [66b.] He told how the Lord set the monkey on the throne and made his abode on Mount Pravarṣana; he described the rains and the autumn, Rāma's wrath and the monkey's terror. [C. 65.] He told how the Monkey King sent out his monkeys, who ran in all directions in quest of Sītā; how the monkeys entered the cavern and how Saṃpāti met them; how the Son of the Wind, having learnt what

had happened, leapt across the boundless ocean, entered Laṅkā and brought courage to Sītā; how he laid waste the grove, warned Rāvan, burnt the city and leapt back across the ocean, and how all the monkeys came to Raghurāi and told him all was well with the princess of Videha. Then he described how Raghubir came and encamped with his army on the shore of the ocean, and how Vibhiṣan came and met him and how Ocean was bound. [D. 67a.] He told of the building of the bridge and how the monkey host crossed to the further shore, and how the valiant son of Bāli went as ambassador.

[67b.] He related in full detail the story of the battle between the demons and the monkeys and told of the might and courage and death of Kuṁbhakarṇa and Meghanāda. [C. 66.] He recounted at length the death of the demon host and the duel between Raghupati and Rāvan; the slaying of Rāvan and the grief of Mandodari, the coronation of Vibhiṣan and the relief of the gods. Next, he described the reunion of Sītā and Raghupati, how the gods sang praises with folded hands and how the Lord of grace returned to Avadh with the monkeys, riding on Puspaka, and Rāma's entry into his own city. All these glorious acts the crow recited, and finally the story of Rāma's coronation, with a description of the city and all Rāma's royal statecraft. Bhuśundi related the whole story that I have repeated to you, Bhavāni.

When the king of birds had heard the whole of Rāma's story, he was filled with rapture and said, [S. 68a.] 'Vanished is my doubt now that I have heard a full account of Raghupati's acts, and by your grace, O jewel among crows, I have learnt to love the feet of Rāma! [68b.] When I beheld the Lord in bondage on the battlefield, I was sorely perplexed and wondered why Rāma, who is the sum of all intelligence and bliss, should be in such distress.

[C. 67.] 'When I saw him acting just like an ordinary man, a dreadful doubt took possession of my heart; and now it is that very error that I recognize as being for my good; the Lord of grace has shown me his favour. Only when a man is tormented by the burning heat of the sun does he appreciate the relief he finds in the shade of a tree. If I had not suffered this great delusion, how should I have met with you, my father? How should I have heard the glorious story of Hari, the marvellous lay that you have sung so fully? In this the Vedas, the Āgamas and the Purāṇas agree—adepts and sages too declare it—indeed of this there is no doubt, that only those on whom Rāma looks with favour have intercourse

with pure and holy saints. By Rāma's grace I have looked upon your face, and by your favour all my doubts have been resolved.'

[D. 69a.] When he heard the king of the birds' modest and devoted speech, the crow was in ecstasies. He felt a thrill of joy and his eyes filled with tears. [69b.] O Umā, when good men find a listener who is quick-witted and virtuous, a servant of Hari who delights to hear his sacred history, they reveal to him even the deepest mysteries.

[C. 68.] Then said Kākabhuśundi, to whom the king of birds was very dear, 'Lord, you are altogether worthy of my reverence, for Raghunāyak has blessed you with the fullness of his grace. You had in reality no doubts, perplexities or illusions, but only came, lord, to do me a kindness. |Raghupati used bewilderment as a pretext for sending you and thus doing me honour, O king of birds.

'You spoke, indeed, of your doubts, Garuṭ, and had you cherished them, lord, it would not have been strange. Nārada, Śiva, Brahmā, Sanaka and his brothers, greatest of sages and spiritual preceptors—whom among these has ignorance not blinded? Who is there in the world whom lust has not controlled? Whom has desire not driven mad? Whose heart has anger not consumed?

[D. 70a.] 'Is there any wise man in this world, ascetic, hero, poet, scholar or man of parts, whom greed has not deceived?

[70b.] Whom has the pride of wealth not perverted, or great authority not rendered deaf, or a shaft from the eyes of a beautiful maiden not smitten? [C. 69.] Who has not been corrupted by success?<sup>1</sup> There is none whom arrogance and pride have left uninfluenced. Whom has the fever of youth not driven wild? Whose reputation has not been ruined by possessiveness? Whom has envy not besmirched, or the blast of sorrow not shaken? Who has not been bitten by the serpent of care? Who is there in the world whom illusion has not influenced? Desire is an insect and the body is wood; is there any so resolute that the wood-louse has not attacked him? Men long for sons and wealth and reputation; whose mind have these three passions not corrupted? All these are the attendants of Illusion; her might is measureless;

<sup>1</sup> *gunakṛita sanyapāta*: the *pīkā* refers *guṇa* to *rajas* and *tamas*; but the phrase is explained by others, with more probability, as meaning 'the disorder of arrogance caused by too great success'.

who can describe them? If Śiva and Brahmā stand in awe of her, what can be said of other beings?

[D. 71a.] 'Illusion's formidable host is found in every quarter of the world; lust and its fellows are her captains; hypocrisy, deceit and heresy her soldiers in the ranks. [71b.] She is the hand-maid of Raghbir, and even though her falsity be known, yet can she not be dispelled without the grace of Rāma; this I assert, my lord, and swear that it is true. [C. 70.] That illusion which makes the whole world dance and whose mysterious action none can comprehend, king of birds, is herself set a-dancing like an actress with all her troupe by the play of the Lord's eyebrows; and Rāma is that sum of True Being, Thought and Bliss, the uncreated dwelling-place of wisdom, beauty and might, pervading all and all that is pervaded, undivided, infinite, entire, the Blessed Lord of never-failing power, impersonal, supreme, whom neither speech nor sense can grasp, all-seeing, faultless and invincible, disinterested, formless, undeluded, everlasting, void of emotion, very bliss, transcending nature, the Lord of power who dwells in every heart, desireless, passionless, imperishable Absolute. Delusion finds no place in him; can darkness ever face the sun?

[D. 72a.] 'For the sake of his worshippers Rāma, the Blessed Lord, assumed the form of a king and played his most holy part as an ordinary man. [72b.] Just as an actor plays upon the stage in various disguises, exhibiting characters appropriate to his dress, but himself remains the same, [C. 71.] so, too, O king of birds, does Raghupati act his part, deluding the demons but gladdening the faithful. But evil-minded men, victims of worldliness and lust, impute delusion to the Lord, my master, as when a man with defective vision says that the moon is yellow, or, king of birds, when one with no sense of direction says that the sun has risen in the west. So, too, a man in a boat sees the land moving, and under the influence of delusion imagines that he is motionless; and when children spin round, their house and all are not spinning round, but they tell each other so, saying what is not true. So it is with delusion in relation to Hari, O bird; he has nothing whatever to do with ignorance, but hapless dullards, subject to illusion, whose hearts are obscured beneath a mass of veils, foolishly and stubbornly cherish doubts, imputing their own ignorance to Rāma.

[D. 73a.] 'How can these fools understand Raghupati, slaves as they are to lust and wrath and pride and greed, dwelling content in a house of misery, fallen into a well of darkness? [73b.] The

impersonal form is easy to comprehend, but no one understands the personal; even sages are perplexed when they hear of his various acts, some simple, some mysterious.

[C. 72.] 'Listen now, O king of birds, while I declare the sovereign power of Raghupati. I will tell you a delightful story, as far as I am able, the whole story of how I, my lord, became a prey to delusion. You, my friend, are a vessel of Rāma's grace, devoted to Hari's perfections and a joy to myself; therefore will I hide nothing from you but reveal a very delectable mystery. See how kindly Rāma is! He never lets pride take a hold upon his servants, for pride binds men to the cycle of mortality and is the source of many torments and the origin of every woe. That is why the gracious Lord, who loves his servants so dearly, removes it. As when a child has a boil upon its body, lord, and its mother lances it and appears to be cruel, [D. 74a.] and although the child feels the pain at first and cries, unable to bear it, the mother pays no heed to her infant's pain, desiring only to relieve its sickness, [74b.] in the same way Raghupati heals his servants of their pride for their own good. Why not then turn aside from error and worship such a Lord?

[C. 73.] 'Now listen attentively, king of birds, while I tell the story of Rāma's kindness and my own stupidity. Whenever Rāma assumes a human form and plays his many parts for his worshippers' sake, I go to the city of Avadh and take delight in watching his childish pranks. I go there and witness his birthday celebrations and stay there for five very pleasant years. For the boy Rāma is my patron deity, his form as beauteous as a myriad Loves. I gaze and gaze at the face of my Lord and satisfy the desire of my eyes, O Garuṭ! Wearing the body of a little crow, I go wherever Hari goes and watch his manifold childish games. [D. 75a.] Wherever he roams in his boyish play, I fly about by his side, and when he lets fall any food in the courtyard, I pick it up and eat it.

[75b.] 'One day Raghubir played a most extraordinary game,' and at the remembrance of the Lord's antics he fell into an ecstasy of rapture. [C. 74.] Bhuśundi continued: 'Hearken, king of birds; the acts of Rāma delight his servants. The palace of the king was altogether beautiful, with every kind of precious stone set in gold. None can describe the charm of the courtyard wherein the four brothers were ever at play. In that courtyard Raghurāl would wander about and enjoy his childish sports, a delight to his mother's eyes. Emerald-dark his delicate frame; on every limb

the charm of many a Love; soft feet as rosy as the budding lotus; toenails that outshone in beauty the radiance of the moon. There, too, were the four beauteous marks, the thunderbolt and the rest, and lovely sweet-tinkling anklets; and round his waist gleamed a fair girdle of gold and gems, with bells that made melodious music. [D. 76.] Three pretty creases on his belly and deep and charming navel; broad chest, and on it all such ornaments and clothes as children wear. [C. 75.] Rosy hands, entrancing fingernails, long arms bedecked with bracelets; a lion-cub's shoulders and neck marked like the conch; a shapely chin and mouth unmatched in charm; lisping speech and ruddy lips; two rows of pretty teeth, small and white; lovely cheeks and fascinating nose and a smile like the moon's rays to gladden all; eyes like the dark-blue lotus, delivering souls from birth and death; forehead agleam with the yellow sect-mark; curved eyebrows, shapely level ears, and over all, the loveliness of dark and curling locks. He wore on his body a fine yellow tunic; his laugh and glance delighted me. Perfect in beauty, he roamed about the king's courtyard and danced when he saw his shadow.

'He played all sorts of tricks with me; I am ashamed to tell them. When he ran to catch me with a merry laugh, and I flew away, he would show me a cake. [D. 77a.] When I came near, the Lord would laugh and weep when I flew away. If I went close to him to touch his feet, he would turn round and run away, looking back at me. [77b.] When I saw him playing like an ordinary child, I was perplexed, wondering what were these acts of the Lord, perfect in intelligence and bliss.

[C. 76.] 'While I was thus reflecting, king of birds, illusion, sent by Raghupati, possessed my being; yet that illusion caused me no pain, nor did it cast me like other creatures into the round of birth and death. There was another reason for this; now listen carefully, my lord Garuṇ. Sītā's spouse alone is knowledge invisible. All creation is subject to illusion. If all possessed perfect knowledge, tell me, what would be the distinction between God and the soul? The arrogant soul is under the influence of illusion, and illusion, wherein dwell the elements of nature, is subject to God. The soul is dependent, God self-dependent. Souls are many, but Lakṣmi's lord but one. Though this distinction, created by illusion, is unreal, yet without the grace of Hari it cannot be resolved, try as one may.'

[D. 78a.] 'However wise a man may be, if he aims at final release without worshipping Rāmacandra, he is but a beast without tail or horns. [78b.] Though the moon rise in the brilliance of its fullness<sup>1</sup> and the whole host of stars, though every hill be set on fire, yet is the night not banished till the sun rises. [C. 77.] Even so, O king of birds, the troubles of men's souls cannot be dispelled unless they worship Hari. Ignorance affects not the servants of Hari, for knowledge, sent by the Lord, possesses them. Hence, Garur, the servant is not destroyed, but his devotion to his master grows ever stronger.

'When Rāma saw me bewildered and perplexed, he laughed. Now hear his wondrous act. The mystery of this sportive act no one could comprehend, not even his younger brothers nor yet his mother or father. On hands and knees he ran to catch me; dark was his body, rosy his hands and feet. Then, Garur, I flew away and Rāma stretched out his arms to seize me; and however far I flew into the sky, there I saw Hari's arms close beside me. [D. 79a.] I flew off to Brahmā's realm and looked back as I flew; and, O my friend, I saw there was but two fingers' breadth between me and Rāma's arms! [79b.] Piercing the seven veils, I went as far as I could fly; but when I saw the Lord's arms even there, I was again astounded.

[C. 78.] 'I was afraid and closed my eyes. I opened them again and lo! I had returned to the city of Kosala. Rāma looked at me and smiled, and when he laughed, I straightway entered his mouth. Hearken, king of birds; in his belly I beheld a cluster of many universes; marvellous and manifold were the spheres therein, each one more wonderfully contrived than the rest. Millions of Brahmās and Śivas, innumerable stars and suns and moons, countless guardians of the world and gods of Death and times, numberless hills and broad plains, oceans and rivers and lakes and forests without number, a broad expanse of manifold creation; gods, sages, adepts, serpents, men and Kinnaras, and all four kinds of creatures, moving and unmoved. [D. 80a.] What I had never seen or heard of, what had never entered my mind, all that marvel I saw there—how can it be described?

[80b.] 'In each universe I remained a hundred years, and many a universe I thus beheld as I roamed about. [C. 79.] In each sphere were different Brahmās, different Viṣṇus, Śivas, Manus and

<sup>1</sup> nākāpasi goraya : the full moon with all its sixteen kalas, or digits.

guardians of the quarters, men, Gandharvas, ghosts and vampires Kinnaras, demons, beasts and birds and serpents. Hosts of gods and devils of many kinds and different sorts of every living creature were there. There, too, were many a land, river, ocean, lake and mountain—a varied assemblage of all created things. In every universe I saw my own self, and many an object beyond compare. In each world were the river Sarayū and a separate city of Avadh, each with its several men and women. Hearken, friend; in each universe were Daśarath and Kausalyā and Bharat and his brothers in various forms; Rāma, too, incarnate, enjoying his numberless childish sports.

[D. 81a.] 'All these great marvels, Garur, I saw in different forms as I roamed through countless worlds; but the Lord Rāma I saw not in any other guise, [81b.] but always just that childish form, that beauty, that gracious Raghubir in every world I saw as I wandered on, driven by the wind of illusion.

[C. 80.] 'As I strayed through many a universe, it seemed as though a hundred aeons passed. I wandered on until at last I came to my own abode, and there I stayed for a space. Then I heard that my Lord had been born at Avadh and I arose and ran there, rejoicing and full of love. I went and saw the festive birthday scene, just as I told you in my former lay. In Rāma's belly I saw many worlds; I could see them, but I could not describe them. Then once more I saw Rāma the wise, Lord of illusion, the gracious God. Again and again I pondered; my understanding was confused and obscured by ignorance; in two moments I saw all this, and I was weary and great was my perplexity.

[D. 82a.] 'Then the gracious Raghubir saw my distress and laughed; and—believe me, O steadfast Garur—as soon as he laughed, I came out of his mouth. [82b.] Again Rāma began to play the same boyish games with me; in a myriad ways I reasoned with myself, but my mind could find no rest. [C. 81.] When I beheld these games and remembered that majestic scene, I lost consciousness and fell to the ground, unable to utter a word, but only, "Save me, save me, O saviour of thy troubled worshippers!" When the Lord saw that I was distraught with love, he checked the influence of his illusion. The Lord laid his lotus hands upon my head and in compassion for my wretched state put an end to all my cares. The gracious Lord who comforts his servants, even Rāma, dispelled all my delusion; and now, when I thought on all the details of the majesty he had formerly revealed, intense delight possessed my soul,

and beholding the affection the Lord felt for his votaries, there sprang up in my heart a profound devotion. Trembling with emotion, with folded hands and eyes full of tears, I made my earnest prayer.

[D. 83a.] 'When he heard my loving petition and saw his servant's wretched plight, Rāmā's lord spoke tender words, profound and comforting: [83b.] "Kākabhuśundi, ask of me a boon, for know that I am highly pleased with you. The eight perfections, or other attainments, or final liberation, the height of bliss, [C. 82.] or knowledge, discernment, detachment or mystic wisdom, or else those many accomplishments in the world which sages scarcely attain—all these will I bestow on you this day most certainly; ask me whatever your soul desires."

'When I heard the Lord's words, I fell into an ecstasy. Then I began to reflect that the Lord had promised me all kinds of blessings, true enough, but had said nothing about the gift of faith in himself. Now all accomplishments and blessings without faith are as insipid as condiments without salt. What is the use of a blessing unaccompanied by devotion? Thus I pondered, O king of birds, and replied, "Lord, if you are pleased with me and would grant me a boon, if you would be gracious to me and loving, then, master, I ask for the gift my soul desires, for you are generous and know the secrets of all hearts; [D. 84a.] it is that intense and utterly single-minded devotion to your person which Vedas and Purānas hymn, which great ascetics and sages seek and few by my Lord's grace can find! [84b.] O tree of Paradise to the faithful, friend of the suppliant, ocean of mercy, abode of bliss! Of your compassion, O Lord Rāma, grant me that devotion to yourself!"

[C. 83.] "'So be it!' said the prince of the house of Raghu, and added these very gracious words: "Hearken, crow; you are by nature wise, and it is natural that you should ask for such a boon as this. You have asked for faith, the source of every blessing; there is none in the world so fortunate as you! You have asked for faith, which sages cannot win for all their infinite endeavours, though they consume their bodies in the fires of prayer and austerity. I delight to mark your prudence; it is most pleasing to me. Hearken, bird; now by my gracious gift all that is good shall dwell in your heart. Faith, knowledge, mystic intuition, detachment, the secrets of ascetic methods with their several distinctions—

of all these you shall know the mysteries, and by my favour may dispense with all laborious means thereto.

[D. 85a.] "None of the errors born of illusion will now influence you. Know me to be the Absolute, without beginning, uncreated, impersonal, in which dwell all perfections; [85b.] and hearken, crow; remember that my worshippers are ever dear to me, and love my feet with steadfast devotion of body, mind and speech.

[C. 84.] "Now listen to my words, most pure and true and easy to understand, as uttered by the Vedas and other scriptures. Listen attentively while I declare to you my own peculiar doctrine; forsake all else and worship only me. The world is created by my illusion, and in it are various kinds of creatures, moving and unmoved. All are dear to me, for all are my creation, but the creature I delight in most is man; of men, the Brāhmaṇ, and of Brāhmaṇs the student of the Veda; of these he who follows the Vedic precepts; of these the ascetic is most dear to me, and then the man of wisdom, and among the wise dearest of all the mystic. But dearer to me than these is my own servant who looks to me for refuge and whose trust is in no other. This is the truth that I declare to you again and again—none is so dear to me as my servant. One without faith, be he Brahmā himself, is no dearer to me than any other creature; but the meanest of all beings, if he be possessed of faith, is dear to me as my own life. This is my doctrine.

[D. 86.] "Tell me, who does not love a servant who is honest, virtuous and intelligent? That is a principle laid down in the Vedas and the Purāṇas. [C. 85.] Now listen, crow, attentively. One father has many sons, differing in accomplishments, character and conduct; one is a scholar, one an ascetic, and one a man of wisdom; one is wealthy, one brave and one liberal; one is a man of wide knowledge and one a religious devotee; but their father loves them all equally. But if there is one who devotes himself to his father in thought and word and deed, and never even dreams of any other duty, that son the father loves as his own life, even though he be utterly ignorant. In like manner I regard with equal compassion all creatures that exist, be they brute beasts or gods or men or demons; for the entire universe is my creation. But among them all one who forswears pride and trickery and worships me in thought and word and deed, [D. 87a.] whether man, eunuch or woman, animate creature or inanimate, if with heart and soul he worships me unfeignedly, is most dear of all to me.

[S. 87b.] "O bird, I tell you truly, a single-minded servant is dear to me as my own life. Remember this, forsake all other hope and trust, and worship only me. [C. 86.] Time shall have no power over you; meditate on me and worship me without ceasing."

"I could never have grown weary of listening to my Lord's ambrosial words. I felt a thrill of joy and my soul was enraptured. Only the mind and the ear can comprehend that happiness; the tongue cannot describe it. Only the eyes can experience the bliss of beholding the beauty of the Lord; but how can they express it? They have no voice.

'After thus instructing and consoling me, he began once more to play his childish tricks. With tears in his eyes and looking a little cross, he glanced towards his mother, as much as to say, "I'm very hungry!", and when his mother saw it, she got up in a hurry and ran to him, spoke to him tenderly and took him to her breast. She took him on her lap and began to give him milk, singing as she did so of Raghupati's charming ways.

[S. 88a.] 'That bliss for the sake of which Purāri, the blessed giver of bliss, puts on his awesome garb, the men and women of the city of Avadh ever enjoyed to the full. [88b.] The good and wise who have only once, even in a dream, tasted of a little of that bliss think naught, O king of birds, of the joys of heaven.

[C. 87.] 'After that I stayed for some time at Avadh and watched his pretty childish amusements. By Rāma's grace I had won the boon of faith; so doing homage to the feet of my Lord, I returned to my own retreat. From the day when Raghunāyak made me his own, I have never been influenced by illusion.

'I have told you the whole mysterious story of how Hari's illusion made game of me. Now I declare to you, O king of birds, my own experience. Unless one worships Hari, troubles come not to an end. Mark this well, Garu; the almighty power of Rāma cannot be understood without his grace; without such understanding there can be no confidence, and where confidence is lacking, no devotion; where there is no devotion, faith lacks assured endurance, as water, king of birds, retains not always its smooth surface.

[S. 89a.] 'Can knowledge be attained without a *guru*? Can knowledge be attained without detachment? No more can happiness be won without faith in Hari—so say the Vedas and the Purāṇas. [89b.] Can anyone, my friend, win peace of mind unless he be of a contented nature? Can a boat travel where there is no water, though one work oneself to death with trying to make it?

[C. 88.] 'Where there is no contentment, desire is not destroyed, and while desire continues, it is vain to dream of happiness. Unless one worships Rāma, can desires be overcome? Can a tree ever take root where there is no soil? Can equanimity be attained without the highest wisdom? Can one find space where there is no ether? Religion cannot exist apart from faith. Can one experience scent without the element of earth? Without penance can one win widespread fame? Can there be taste in the world without the element of water? Can character be formed, my lord, unless one serves a wise master, any more than form can be distinguished without the element of fire? Can the mind be at rest without inward peace, any more than touch can be experienced without the element of air? Can any perfection be attained without trust? So without worship of Hari there is no victory over the dread of rebirth. [D. 90a.] Where trust is absent, there can be no devotion; Rāma's heart melts not where there is no devotion, and without the grace of Rāma no creature can possibly expect peace. [S. 90b.] So reflect and resolutely forswear all doubt and criticism, and worship Rāma, hero of the house of Raghu, compassionate, beautiful, bringer of bliss.

[C. 89.] 'Thus, lord and king of birds, have I proclaimed, as far as in me lies, the sovereign power and majesty of the Lord; nor have I elaborated aught by inference, for I have seen it all with my own eyes. There is no end to the tale of his greatness, his names, his beauty and perfections, for Raghunāth himself is infinite. Sages, as each is able, hymn Hari's virtues; the Vedas, Śesa and Śiva cannot compass them. All winged creatures, from yourself to a mosquito, fly up into the sky but never reach its limit; in like manner, my friend, Raghupati's greatness is unfathomable and no one can ever sound it.

'Rāma is beauteous as a myriad Loves; destructive of his foes as countless myriads of Durgās; luxurious as a myriad Indras; of space immeasurable as a myriad firmaments. [D. 91a.] His might is as the force of a myriad winds, his brightness the brightness of a myriad suns; he is as cooling as a myriad moons, subduing all the terrors of rebirth; [91b.] unconquerable, unapproachable and endless as a myriad Deaths; unassailable is the Blessed Lord as the fire of a myriad comets. [C. 90.] The Lord is as fathomless as a myriad nether worlds; as terrible as a myriad gods of death; purifying as countless myriads of holy places; his name blots out all traces of accumulated sin. Raghubir is firm-founded as a myriad Himālayas; profound as a myriad oceans; and like a myriad cows

of plenty the Blessed Lord liberally satisfies all desires. His art is the art of countless myriads of Sāradās; he creates with the skill of a myriad Brahmās, preserves like a myriad Viṣṇus and destroys like a myriad Rudras. He is wealthy as a myriad Kuveras and as rich in creation as a myriad Māyās. He supports a burden like a myriad Serpent Kings. The Lord is sovereign of the world and knows no limit and no equal. [Ch. 10.] Incomparable is he and knows no equal; Rāma only is like Rāma, as the Vedas declare. It is a slight to the sun to compare it to a myriad fireflies; but even so do great sages describe Hari, each according to the play of his wit; yet does the Lord, who in his tender mercy looks only to their loving intent, listen with affection and delight.

[D. 92a.] ‘Rāma is an ocean of limitless perfections; can anyone sound it? I have only repeated to you something of what I have heard from the saints. [S. 92b.] The Blessed Lord, abode of bliss and home of compassion, is mastered by the spirit of love. Abjure then thought of self, pride and conceit, and ever worship Sitā’s lord!'

[C. 91.] When he heard Bhuśundi’s delightful discourse, the king of birds was overjoyed and ruffled up his feathers. His eyes filled with tears and his soul was enraptured as he laid upon his heart the sovereign majesty of the Lord Raghupati. When he thought upon his earlier doubts, he felt remorse that he had deemed the eternal Absolute to be mere man. Repeatedly he bowed his head before the feet of the crow and felt for him an ever greater love, as though he were Rāma’s very self. No one can cross the sea of birth and death without a spiritual guide, though he be as great as Brahmā or Śāmkara. ‘Father,’ he said, ‘the serpent of doubt had bitten me and I was suffering from all the painful spasms of critical unbelief; but Raghunāyak, who comforts the faithful, has revived me with the antidote of your presence, and by your favour my doubts have been resolved and I have learnt the matchless mystery of Rāma.’

[D. 93a.] Garuḍ bowed before him with many words of praise and then once more addressed him with folded hands in gentle tones of love and modesty: [93b.] ‘My lord and master, I would put a question to you in my ignorance; graciously be pleased to answer me, for I am your servant. [C. 92.] You are all-wise and grasp essential truth with full enlightenment; you are intelligent, virtuous and straightforward in your conduct, a pattern of detachment and wisdom, high and low, a beloved servant of Raghunāyak. Ex-

plain to me, my father, fully why you have been born in such a form as this, and tell me too, my winged master, where you learnt the beauteous Lake of Rāma's Acts. Lord, I heard from Śiva that not even at the Great Dissolution do you perish, and God cannot lie; hence this doubt arises in my mind; all created beings, lord, whether serpents, men or gods, yea, the whole world is a morsel for Death to devour; Death has absorbed countless universes and no man can defy him. [S. 94a.] Then how is it that awful Death has no power over you? Tell me of your grace; is it the effect of wisdom, or the power of ascetic contemplation? [D. 94b.] Lord, as soon as ever I entered your retreat, my delusion and error fell away. Why was that so, my lord? Be pleased to explain it all.' [C. 93.] The crow was glad to hear Garuṭ's petition, Umā, and replied with the utmost affection, 'A blessing on your understanding, Garuṭ! I am indeed pleased with your questions. When I heard your sensible and affectionate questions, I recalled a great many of my former lives. Listen then, my son, with reverent attention while I relate to you the whole of my history. Prayer, penance, sacrifice, mind-control and self-restraint, vows, alms-giving, detachment, discernment, austerity and mystic intuition—the effect of all these is devotion to Raghupati's feet, and without such devotion no one can enjoy tranquillity. It was in this form that I won to faith in Rāma and that is why I feel a special affection for it; for everyone loves that which has helped him to gain his private end.

[S. 95a.] 'This is a scriptural maxim, O Garuṭ, and holy men agree, that one should love even the meanest, if one deems it to have done one a great good. [95b.] Silk comes from a worm, but of it are lovely silken garments woven; therefore do all men tend the worm, utterly vile though it be, as they would cherish their own lives.

[C. 94.] 'The most truly profitable end a man can seek is this—devotion to the feet of Rāma in thought and word and deed. That body is the holiest, that the most comely, wherein Raghubir may be worshipped. If a man be no friend of Rāma, though he wear a body like to Brahmā's, no poet or scholar will praise him. It was when I wore this form that faith in Rāma took root in my heart, and that is why, my master, I love it best of all. Though death is at my own disposal, yet quit I not this body, for, as the Vedas say, the disembodied cannot worship. In former days I was tortured by foolish doubts; I resisted Rāma and found no rest even in sleep.

Throughout my various lives I practised all manner of expedients—  
austerity, prayer, penance, sacrifice and charity; what womb was  
there in which I was not born as I wandered, O king of birds,  
through the world? I have tried and experienced every practical  
means, my lord, but have never been so happy as I am now.  
Lord, I remember many of my former lives, for by the grace of  
Śiva the veil of ignorance no more obscures my understanding.

[D. 96a.] 'Listen now, O king of birds, while I tell you the story  
of a former life. When you hear it, such devotion to the feet of the  
Lord will spring up in your heart that all your troubles will be  
at an end.'

[96b.] 'In a former aeon, my lord, there was an age, the Kaliyuga,  
full of iniquity. Men and women devoted themselves to impurity  
and were all opposed to Vedic doctrine. [C. 95.] In that age  
I went to the city of Kosala and was born in the body of a Śūdra.  
Thought, word and deed I devoted to the service of Śiva and in my  
arrogance scorned all other deities. I was intoxicated with the  
pride of wealth, a perfect braggart, barbarous and swollen with  
self-conceit. Although I lived in Raghupati's capital, I thought  
nothing at that time of his majesty. It is only now that I have come  
to understand the influence of Avadh, as declared by the Vedas,  
the Āgamas and the Purāṇas, that anyone who in any life dwells  
in that city will become a votary of Rāma; for it is only when  
Rāma, the bearer of the bow, takes up his abode in a man's heart  
that he realizes the virtue of Avadh.'

'That Kaliyuga, Garur, was desperately wicked; everyone, both  
man and woman, was a devotee of sin. [D. 97a.] The iniquity  
of that age suppressed religion and all the sacred books were set  
at nought. Hypocrites invented and promulgated a number of  
different heresies. [97b.] All were utterly deluded; good works  
were stifled by greed. Listen, wise Garur, while I tell you some-  
thing of what passed for righteousness in the Kaliyuga.'

[C. 96.] 'The rules of caste were neglected and the four orders of  
life; men and women all made it their aim to oppose the precepts  
of scripture; Brāhmans sold the Vedas for a price and kings  
devoured their people. Not one paid heed to Vedic ordinance.  
Everyone trod the way that pleased him best; he was the learned  
man who bragged the loudest. The ostentatious hypocrite was called  
by all a saint; the prudent man was he who robbed his neighbour  
of his goods; the boaster was the virtuous man. The liar and buf-  
foon were called accomplished in that age. Unprincipled deserters

of the Vedic way were styled the wise and the ascetic in that Kaliyuga, and those who wore long nails and bound their hair in massive coils the Kaliyuga acclaimed as penitents.

[D. 98a.] 'Those who attired themselves in inauspicious trappings and decked themselves in ghastly adornments and ate all kinds of food, forbidden or permitted, were held to be ascetics and adepts and worthy of all reverence in that age. [S. 98b.] Those who did harm to others were held in high respect and honour, and those who thought and uttered and acted lies were the preachers in the Kaliyuga. [C. 97.] Men, my lord, were all ruled by women and danced to their tune like acrobats' monkeys. Śūdras gave Brāhmans lessons in wisdom, and putting on the sacred thread accepted iniquitous alms. Everyone was lustful, avaricious and passionate, and flouted the gods, the Brāhmans, the scriptures and the saints. Wretched women abandoned their virtuous and handsome lords and paid court to other women's husbands. Wedded wives went unadorned while widows flaunted new jewels every day. The *guru* and his pupil were like the blind and the deaf; the pupil never listened and the *guru* had no insight. The *guru* who relieves his pupil of money but not of his troubles falls into the torments of hell. Mothers and fathers called their children together and taught them that the filling of the belly is the first duty of man.

[D. 99a.] 'Men and women knew nothing of spiritual wisdom, but they talked about nothing else, and were greedy enough to murder a Brāhmaṇ or a *guru* for a farthing. [99b.] Śūdras argued with Brāhmans, "Are we inferior to you? The true Brāhmaṇ is he who knows Brahma." Such were their impudent taunts.

[C. 98.] Those who ran after their neighbours' wives, past masters of fraud, infatuated, violent and selfish to the last degree, were called mystic philosophers. I myself have seen the manners of the Kaliyuga. Eternally lost themselves, they dragged down with them any who perchance were walking in the way of righteousness. Aeon after aeon into the several hells do these fall who criticize and carp at the scriptures. Men of the lowest castes—oilmen, potters, Cāndāls, Kirāts, Kols, distillers—when their wives died or they lost their worldly goods, would shave their heads and become wandering friars, claiming reverence from Brāhmans and wantonly ruining their hopes of fortune in this world and the next. The Brāhmans were illiterate, grasping and lascivious, profligate and senseless and the husbands of loose-living outcastes. Śūdras

indulged in all sorts of prayers and penances and vowed and seated themselves on the dais to recite the Purāṇas. Everybody did just exactly what he liked; it was an age of utterly unspeakable wickedness.

[D. 100a.] 'In the Kaliyuga there were universal lawlessness and confusion of caste; all sinned and suffered the effects of sin—pain, terror, sickness, sorrow and bereavement. [100b.] Men walked not on the path of faith in Hari, the path approved in scripture, the way of continence and wisdom, but followed after various heresies and vain imaginings. [Ch. 11.] Religious mendicants amassed wealth and built houses; they were carried away by worldliness and had done with abstinence. Ascetics were rich and householders poor; the Kaliyuga, my son, was an age of unutterable incongruity. Men turned their wives out of doors, nobly born and faithful though they were, and violated all laws of decent behaviour by bringing in servant girls. Sons obeyed their parents only as long as they saw not a woman's face; from the day when they took a fancy to their wife's relations they would regard their own kinsfolk as enemies. Kings loved vice and abhorred virtue, and were always oppressing their subjects with undeserved punishments. The lowest were accounted noble, if only they were rich; the sole mark of a Brāhmaṇa was the sacred thread, and nakedness of an ascetic. Anyone who paid no heed to Purāṇa or Veda was held to be a true saint and servant of Hari in the Kaliyuga. There were plenty of poets in the world, but not one to reward them; numbers to criticize virtue, but not one to practise it. Men were constantly in the grip of famine in that age, and everyone died miserably for want of food.'

[D. 101a.] 'Hearken, O king of birds; in the Kaliyuga fraud, obstinacy, conceit, hatred, heresy, arrogance, ignorance, lust, pride and the like prevailed throughout the universe; [101b.] and when men practised prayer and penance, observance, sacrifice and charity, it was with dark designs; the gods sent down no rain upon the earth; the rice was sown but yielded no grain. [Ch. 12.] Women's only ornament was their hair and they were never satisfied; they were poor and wretched and utterly self-centred; they wanted to be happy, poor fools, but ignored religion; their minds were narrow and hard with no tenderness in them. Men were afflicted with disease and found no pleasure in life; they were self-assertive and quarrelsome without cause. Though their lives

were short, some five or ten years, they imagined they would outlast the end of the aeon.

'The Kaliyuga completely upset mankind. No one cared about sister or daughter; there was no contentment, consideration or composure; everyone, whether of high or low degree, became a beggar. The world was full of envy, harsh words and avarice; no one was tranquil. Everybody was a prey to bereavement and despair; no one followed the rules of caste or heeded the four orders of life. There were no self-restraint, charity, pity and understanding; all was brutishness and dishonest dealing. Men and women all pampered the flesh, and everywhere were slanderous tongues.

[D. 102a.] 'Hearken, Garuṇ; the Kaliyuga was a mass of pollution and vice; yet in that age there was one great advantage—the way of salvation was easy. [102b.] The goal which in the first three ages is reached by ritual worship, sacrifice and austerity men reach in the Kaliyuga only by mention of the name of Hari. [C. 99.] In the Kṛitayuga everyone is an ascetic and mystic; men pass across the sea of birth and death by meditating on Hari. In the Tretāyuga men perform various sacrifices and escape rebirth by offering their works to the Lord. In the Dvāparayuga the ritual worship of Raghupati's feet is the only means to liberation. But in the Kaliyuga by merely singing the praise of Hari's virtues men sound the bottom of the ocean of mortality. In the Kaliyuga there is no need of austerity, sacrifice or knowledge; the singing of Rāma's praise is the only sure means of salvation. He who forswears all other assurance and worships only Rāma and devoutly sings the praise of his perfections most certainly passes over the sea of birth and death. The power of the Name is revealed in the Kaliyuga and has this one great purifying effect, that merit stored in the soul abides but not demerit.

[D. 103a.] 'No age can compare with the Kaliyuga provided that a man has faith. If he sings the praise of Rāma's spotless virtues, he passes without effort over the sea of birth and death. [103b.] Religion is known to have four feet, and one is most essential in the Kaliyuga; it is charity that brings blessing, in whatsoever way the alms be given.

[C. 100.] 'Each several age has its own peculiar characteristics, implanted in the hearts of all by Rāma's delusive power. The special virtue of the Kṛitayuga is to be found in purity, truth, tranquillity, wisdom and cheerfulness. Much of the element of Truth, with something of Energy and a devotion to action, together

with a general sense of happiness, are the special marks of the Tretāyuga. A quantity of Energy, very little Truth, and some Darkness, together with a proneness to joy and fear, are the marks of the Dvāparayuga. A great deal of Darkness and only a modicum of Energy, with a general cantankerousness, are the effect of the Kaliyuga.<sup>1</sup> The wise recognize the special characteristics of each age and devote themselves to their appropriate duties and to no others; but these characteristics of the several ages have no effect on him who devoutly loves the feet of Raghupati. A conjurer's sleight of hand may be most baffling, king of birds, but his magic is no magic to his servants. [D. 104a.] The merits and demerits that are caused by Hari's illusion do not vanish unless Hari be worshipped; so consider and worship Rāma without desire.

[104b.] 'In that Kaliyuga, O king of birds, I lived for many years at Avadh; then there was a famine and hunger drove me to another country. [C. 101.] Hearken, Garuṭ; I went to Ujjain in a state of utter wretchedness, poverty and misery. There after some time I got together a little property and once more began to worship Śambhu. There was a Brāhmaṇ who spent the whole of his time in the worship of Śiva according to Vedic rules, an exceptionally good man, well versed in spiritual things. He worshipped Śambhu but cast no aspersions on Hari. I became his disciple, but I was a hypocrite. The Brāhmaṇ was kindness itself and a model of integrity; and so, my lord, perceiving my apparent humility, he treated me like a son and instructed me. That excellent Brāhmaṇ taught me Śiva's secret spell and gave me all manner of spiritual lessons. I used to go and repeat the spell in the temple of Śiva and my conceit and self-importance increased apace. [D. 105a.] I, an ignorant, low-born, polluted wretch, in my utter infatuation grew hot with anger at the very sight of a Brāhmaṇ votary of Hari and vented my spleen on Viṣṇu! [S. 105b.] My *guru* was distressed when he saw my behaviour and continually admonished me, but his advice only infuriated me. Can a conceited man gladly accept moral instruction?

[C. 102.] 'One day the *guru* sent for me and instructed me in all the principles of right conduct. "My son," he said, "the worship of Śiva should result in profound devotion to the feet of Rāma. Why, my boy, even Śiva and Brahmā worship Rāma; much more, then, should a miserable mortal! If Brahmā and Śiva

<sup>1</sup> For this passage see Introduction, p. xxiii.

are devoted to his feet, do you expect peace of mind, unhappy boy, when you regard him with rancour?"

'O king of birds, when I heard the *guru* calling Hara Hari's servant, my heart was consumed with fury. Low-born as I was, I had become puffed up by a little learning, like a snake fed on milk! Arrogant, perverse, ill-fated and ill-bred, I vented my spleen on my *guru* day and night; but he was a man of boundless patience and showed no resentment, but continually gave me the wisest counsel. One who treats a mean-minded man with honour becomes the first object of his destructive attack. Mark me, brother; smoke that arises from fire, when exalted to the rank of a cloud, extinguishes that fire; dust lies despised on the road, constantly trodden under travellers' feet; but let the wind blow it aloft and it first of all sullies the air with its presence and then settles in the eyes or on the crowns of kings. Hearken, king of birds; wise men realize this and have no dealings with the vulgar; it is a common precept among poets and scholars that it is better neither to quarrel nor to make friends with a bad man; from such, my lord, one should always hold aloof and avoid them as one would a dog. I was wicked, hypocritical and perverse of heart; my *guru* advised me for my good but his counsels pleased me not.'

[D. 106a.] 'One day I was repeating the name of Śiva in Hara's temple when the *guru* came in; but I was so arrogant that I did not rise and do obeisance. [106b.] The kindly *guru* said nothing nor did he feel the least resentment; but Maheśa could not tolerate the heinous sin of disrespect to a *guru*. [C. 103.] Within the temple there sounded a voice from heaven: "Unhappy man, ignorant and proud! Though your *guru* be not wroth, being a man of perfect wisdom and very kind-hearted, yet, fool, will I pronounce a curse upon you; for disrespect pleases me not. If, wretch, I were not to punish you, my scriptural injunction would be set at nought. Fools who bear malice against their *guru* are cast for ten million ages into the lowest hell, and after that they are born as brute beasts and suffer pain for full ten thousand lives. Vile sinner, with a mind one mass of defilement! You kept your seat like a python; so become a serpent! Crawl into the hollow of some huge tree and there abide, lowest of the low, in that low estate!"'

[D. 107a.] 'When the *guru* heard Śiva's awful curse, he cried aloud in despair, and seeing me tremble, he was sore distressed. [107b.] Falling prostrate before Śiva, the Brāhmaṇ with folded

hands and faltering voice made his devout and humble prayer as he thought on my appalling plight:

[Ch. 13.] “I reverence the sovereign Lord, Release itself, almighty, all-pervading Absolute, very Veda! I worship the self-contained, impersonal, without distinction or desire, intelligence, the heavens themselves, wearing the heavens as a garment! Formless, source of the mystic syllable, one with the universal spirit, beyond the reach of speech or knowledge or sense, the Lord, the Mountain King, the awful Death of Death the almighty, merciful abode of virtues, immortal—him I reverence!

“I worship Śāṅkara, beloved Lord of all, solemn and white as the mountains of snow, radiant and beauteous as a myriad Loves, with the fair stream of Gāngā flashing forth from his head, the crescent moon bright on his brow and snakes about his neck; with earrings trembling in his ears, large eyes and shaggy eyebrows cheerful of countenance, pitiful, with blue-stained throat and tiger-skin for garment, wearing a necklace of skulls!

“I worship Bhavāni’s lord, accessible to love, the fierce, the noble, the intrepid and supreme, the indivisible, unborn, brilliant with the radiance of a myriad suns, uprooter of the threefold pains, trident in hand!

“O thou who art transcendent above nature, Purāri the blessed, cause of dissolution, who ever grantest bliss to the good, sum of all intelligence and joy, dispeller of delusion, have mercy, have mercy, O Lord, the foe of Love! O lord of Umā, until men worship thy lotus feet there is for them no happiness, no peace of mind, no end to their miseries in this world or the next. Have mercy, Lord, who dwellest in all creatures! I know no way of contemplation, prayer or worship; at all times and in all places I do thee reverence, Śambhu! Save me, Śambhu, my Lord and my God, who am so tormented and sore beset by all the pains of old age and rebirth!”

[Śloka 2.] (This was the eightfold hymn of praise that the Brāhmaṇa uttered to propitiate Hara. To those who devoutly repeat it Śambhu shows his favour.)

[D. 108a.] ‘Omniscient Siva heard the Brāhmaṇa’s prayer and marked his great devotion. Again a voice from heaven was heard in the temple: “O noble Brāhmaṇa, ask a boon!”

[108b.] "Lord, if thou wilt be gracious to me, and if my Lord extends his love to this his humble servant, then grant me, Lord, devotion to thy feet, and then yet one more boon. [108c.] Subject to thy delusive power this stupid creature ever strays in the path of error; be not wroth with him, O Lord, ocean of mercy, Blessed God! [108d.] O thou who hast compassion on the lowly, O Śāṅkara, have mercy upon him, that so, Lord, after a little time thy kindness may release him from the curse; [C. 104.] and bring it to pass, O gracious Lord, that he may be richly blessed."

'In response to the Brāhmaṇa's unselfish plea the heavenly voice declared, "So be it! Though he has committed a heinous crime and I have cursed him in my wrath, yet will I be very merciful to him in recognition of your piety. O Brāhmaṇa, those who are of a forgiving temper and would work their neighbours' weal are as dear to me as Kharāri; yet, Brāhmaṇa, my curse will not be ineffectual; he must assuredly be born a thousand times, but the intolerable pains that accompany birth and death will have not the least effect on him, nor in any life will his knowledge be lost.

"Now listen, Śūdra, to my sure promise. You have been born in Raghupati's city; moreover, you have devoted yourself to my service; therefore the influence of the city and of my grace will cause faith in Rāma to spring up in your heart. Now listen, brother, to my sure pronouncement; the only vow that pleases Hari is a vow to do service to Brāhmaṇas. Never treat a Brāhmaṇa with disrespect, but hold a saint to be the equal of God himself. Even one who perishes not at the stroke of Indra's thunderbolt or my massive trident or fate's decree or Hari's awful discus is burnt to ashes in the fire of a Brāhmaṇa's vengeance. Store up this wise counsel in your heart and there will be nothing in the world beyond your reach. One other blessing I bestow upon you—you may travel without hindrance whithersoever you will."

[D. 109a.] 'The *guru* was glad when he heard Śiva's promise and replied, "So be it!" He then gave me much good advice and returned home, laying Śambhu's feet upon his heart.

[109b.] 'In accordance with the doom decreed I went to Vindhya-cala and became a serpent; then after some time I quitted that body without the least effort, [109c.] and whatever body I assumed, Garur, I put off again quite easily, just as a man doffs old clothes and puts on new ones. [109d.] Thus Śiva preserved the Vedic ordinances and I suffered no pain. In this manner, O king of birds, I assumed all sorts of forms, but never did my wisdom fail.'

[C. 105.] 'Whatever body I put on—brute or divine or human—I never ceased therein to worship Rāma; but I was always tortured by one memory—my *guru*'s tender-hearted loving-kindness. Finally I was born in the form of a Brāhmaṇa, a form—so say the Purāṇas and the Vedas—which even gods may scarce attain; and when in that form I used to play with little children, it was always Raghu-nāyak's games I played. When I grew older, my father began to teach me; but though I listened to his lessons and understood them and turned them over in my mind, I found no pleasure in them; my mind was inclined to nothing whatsoever, for I was utterly absorbed in devotion to Rāma's feet. Tell me, king of birds, would anyone be such a fool as to turn from the cow of plenty to worship a donkey? Love flooded my soul; I was indifferent to all else, and my father gave up trying to teach me in despair.

'When my father and mother passed away, I retired to the forest to worship the saviour; and wherever I met with holy sages in the woods, I visited them in their hermitages and did obeisance. I asked them to tell me stories of Rāma's perfections and I listened with delight, Garuḍa, while they told them. Thus I roamed about, listening to the tales of Hari's virtues, for by Śambhu's grace I journeyed wherever I pleased. Vanished was the threefold passionate ambition;<sup>1</sup> there was only one longing in my heart that grew ever more vehement, that I might bring to full fruition the purpose of my life by beholding Rāma's lotus feet.'

'Now all the sages whom I questioned told me that God is present in all creation; but this doctrine of the impersonal did not satisfy me; I became ever more attached to the Absolute made personal. [D. 110a.] I remembered what my *guru* had told me and my soul was devoted to Rāma's feet; and as I wandered about, singing the praises of Raghupati, my love for him moment by moment grew ever greater.'

[110b.] 'In the shade of a banyan tree on the summit of Mount Meru sat Lomaśa the sage; when I saw him, I bowed my head before his feet and addressed him very humbly. [110c.] In reply to my modest and courteous greeting, Garuḍa, the gracious sage asked me in kindly wise, "With what object have you come here, Brāhmaṇa?"' [110d.] "O lord of grace," I replied, "you are omniscient and very wise! Instruct me, blessed saint, in the worship of the Absolute made personal."

<sup>1</sup> i.e., desire for a son, for wealth and for honour.

[C. 106.] 'Then, O king of birds, the holy sage reverently recited some tales of Raghupati's excellent perfections; but, being himself a mystic, devoted to the knowledge of the Absolute, and thinking that I was fully qualified to hear it, he began to give me instruction in the nature of the Absolute, uncreated, one without a second, impersonal, dwelling as sovereign in the heart, having no parts, desires, names or forms, comprehensible only by intuition, indivisible, incomparable, transcending mind and sense, stainless, imperishable, immutable, limitless, sum of all bliss. "The Vedas declare," he said, "that Thou art It, and that there is no more difference between It and Thee than between water and its waves." With all manner of comparisons the sage instructed me, but the doctrine of the impersonal laid no hold upon my heart.

'Once more I bowed my head before his feet and said, "O holy sage, teach me how to worship the personal. Faith in Rāma is the water and my soul the fish; how then, O learned saint, can the one be separated from the other? Be pleased so to instruct me that I may behold Raghurāya with my own eyes. First let me feast my eyes on Avadh's lord, and after that I will listen to lessons on the impersonal."

'The sage again gave me a matchless account of Hari, but he demolished the doctrine of the personal and expounded the impersonal. But I would have nothing of the impersonal doctrine and persisted in expounding the personal. I went on arguing with him till the sage showed signs of becoming angry. Hearken, my lord; even the wise are roused to wrath if one treats them with great courtesy. If one rubs sandalwood with sufficient violence, fire is struck from it.

[D. 111a.] 'Again and again the sage angrily repeated his exposition of the way of knowledge, while I sat there and revolved all sorts of questionings in my own mind: [111b.] "Can there be anger without duality, or duality without ignorance? Can a soul that is limited and brutish, a prey to illusion, be like God? [C. 107.] When one desires the good of all, can the outcome ever be pain? Can one be poor if one possesses the philosopher's stone? Can the malicious be free from fear or the lecherous from stain? Can one's line stand secure if one injures a Brāhmaṇ? Is true self-knowledge consistent with action? Can good sense result from association with the wicked? Can an adulterer find salvation? Can those who know the Supreme Spirit experience rebirth? Can those who cavil at Hari ever be happy? Can a kingdom stand without

a knowledge of statecraft? Can sin continue to exist when one recites the acts of Hari? Can there be fair repute without desert? Does one gain ill repute unless one sins? Is there any blessing to equal faith in Hari, hymned by scriptures, saints and Purāṇas? And, brother, is there any loss in this world like that of being born as a man and yet not worshipping Rāma? Is there any vice, Garur, to equal backbiting, or any virtue like kindly feeling?"

"Thus I was thinking over countless arguments, nor did I listen to the sage's teaching with due respect. Again and again I insisted on my belief in the personal till at last the sage said angrily, "You fool, I am giving you the most sublime instruction, yet you pay no heed but put forward all those arguments! I tell you the truth, but you put no faith in what I say; you're suspicious of everything like a crow! Fool! As you are so wise in your own conceits, become this very moment the foulest of birds!" I willingly accepted the curse and felt no alarm or mortification. I immediately became a crow; [D. 112a.] then bowing my head before the sage's feet, with my thoughts fixed on Rāma, the jewel of the house of Raghu, I joyfully flew away.'

[112b.] O Umā, those who love the feet of Rāma and are untouched by lust or pride or wrath behold the world instinct with their own Lord; with whom, then, can they be at enmity?

[G. 108.] 'Hearken, king of birds; the seer was in no way to blame, for the jewel of the house of Raghu inspires the heart of man; and the Lord of grace had caused the sage's mind to err, that he might test my love. When he perceived that I was his own loyal servant in thought and word and deed, the Blessed Lord once more restored the sage's mind; and when the seer perceived my great patience and the perfect confidence I placed in Rāma's feet, he was overwhelmed with astonishment and remorse and courteously summoned me to his presence. He did all he could to comfort me and very gladly taught me Rāma's secret spell. The gracious sage told me how to meditate on Rāma in the form of a child, a mode of contemplation very beautiful and blissful that satisfies me most of all—but I have told you about that before.'

'The sage kept me with him for some little time, and then recited the Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts; and after reverently repeating to me this story, the sage addressed me in these gracious words: "It was by Śambhu's favour, my son, that I learnt this glorious and mysterious Lake of Rāma's Acts, and I have told it all to you because I know you to be Rāma's peculiar votary. But never, my

son, repeat it in the presence of those in whose hearts faith in Rāma finds no place."

"The sage gave me all sorts of good advice and I devoutly bowed my head before the holy man's feet. Touching my head with his lotus hands, the great sage rejoiced to give me his blessing: "Now by my gracious gift," he said, "unwavering faith in Rāma shall dwell for ever in your heart! [D. 113a.] Be for ever beloved of Rāma, an abode of blessed virtues, free from pride, changing your form at will and choosing your own time to die, a treasure-house of wisdom and detachment; [113b.] and in whatever hermitage you dwell and contemplate the Blessed Lord and God, there for a distance of three leagues around shall ignorance exercise no influence. [C. 109.] The pains derived from time and fate, merit, demerit and nature will have no effect on you. You shall understand without difficulty all the various and exquisite mysteries of Rāma's being, as recorded either plainly or in parables by chronicle or Purāna; and may your love for Rāma's feet never grow old! All that your soul desires you shall attain most easily by Hari's favour."

"Hearken, O resolute Garuḍ; no sooner had the sage bestowed his blessing on me than a solemn voice was heard from heaven: "So be it, wise sage, in accordance with your words, for he is my votary in thought and word and deed." When I heard this voice from heaven, I was overjoyed; love flooded my soul and all my doubts disappeared. Humbly taking leave of the sage, and repeatedly bowing my head before his lotus feet, I came with great joy to this hermitage. By the grace of the Lord I had obtained a boon hard to win.

"Hearken, king of birds; here have I dwelt for the past twenty-seven aeons, ever singing the praises of Raghupati while wise birds reverently listen; and whenever Raghubir is born in human form in the city of Avadh to bless his worshippers, I go and stay in Rāma's city and watch his childish games with great delight. Then, laying the child Rāma's image on my heart, I return, O king of birds, to my own hermitage. I have told you the whole story, how it came to pass that I was born in the form of a crow. I have answered all your questions, my friend. Great indeed is the sovereign power of faith in Rāma!"

[D. 114a.] "The reason why I love this form is that in it I learnt devotion to the feet of Rāma and was blessed with the vision of my own Lord, and all my doubts were resolved. [114b.] I

obstinately maintained my belief in faith and the great seer cursed me; yet in the end I won a boon that sages scarce may win; behold the efficacy of faith ! [C. 110.] Those who know this way of faith and yet reject it, striving laboriously to tread the way of knowledge only, are like fools who ignore the cow of plenty standing at their door and roam about in search of an *āku* to give them milk. Hearken, king of birds; those who seek peace by any other means than faith in Hari are like fools and bunglers who would swim across the vast ocean without a boat.'

Garur was glad, Bhavāni, when he heard Bhusundi's words, and gently made reply: 'Lord, by your grace there remains now in my heart no doubt or care or delusion or error. I have heard the sacred story of Rāma's perfections and by your favour my mind is at peace. But there is one more question I would put, my lord; graciously be pleased to solve my problem. Saints, sages, Vedas and Purāṇas declare that nothing is so difficult of attainment as knowledge; and that, my lord, is what the sage was teaching you when you scorned it in comparison with faith. Tell me, then, most gracious lord, in detail what difference there is between knowledge and faith.'

Garur's question delighted the wise crow, who courteously replied, 'There is no real difference between the ways of faith and knowledge, for both put an end to the troubles caused by the cycle of mortality. Yet, O king, great sages do make this distinction; listen carefully, O noble bird. Hearken, Garur; wisdom, detachment, austerity, scientific knowledge—these are all masculine nouns, and the masculine is altogether superior in strength, while the feminine is weak and naturally inferior. [D. 115a.] Men who are self-controlled and resolute can forswear women, but not those who are lustful and slaves to the flesh and love not the feet of Raghubir; [S. 115b.] and even a very learned sage may fall a victim to the moon-bright face of a fawn-eyed damsel when he sees her. Now Viṣṇu's Illusion is revealed as a woman. [C. 111.] Here I am upholding no private judgement of my own, but I am declaring the doctrine of the Vedas, the Purāṇas and the saints. It is a strange fact, Garur, that one woman is not fascinated by the beauty of another. Now mark me; everybody knows that Illusion and Faith are both feminine; further, Faith is beloved of Raghubir, while poor Illusion is no more than a dancing-girl. Because Raghurāya cherishes a special sentiment for Faith, Illusion is very much afraid of her and stands abashed at the sight of anyone

in whose heart faith in Rāma abides, incomparable, unfeigned and ever unhampered. On such an one she fails to exercise her influence. This those sages who are endowed with the highest wisdom realize and pray for faith, the source of every blessing.

[D. 116a.] 'This mystery of Raghunāth no one can be quick to understand; but he who by the grace of Raghupati does understand it is never for a moment affected by delusion.'

[116b.] 'Hear now yet another distinction between knowledge and faith, O wisest of birds, the hearing of which results in an ever-continuous devotion to Rāma's feet.'

[C. 112.] 'Listen, my friend, to this lesson ineffable; it can be understood but not expressed. The soul of the creature is a part of God, indestructible, conscious, pure and by nature perfectly blissful. Subject to illusion, my lord, it is trapped like a parrot or a monkey;<sup>1</sup> the conscious and the unconscious are entangled, and though the union is unreal, the disentanglement is difficult. Thenceforward the soul is involved in the round of birth and death; the bond is not broken, nor is the soul blissful. Though Veda and Purāṇa offer many means of release, the bond is not broken but becomes ever more involved. The heart of the creature is clouded by the darkness of ignorance; how then can the knot be untied if it be not seen? But if God lends his aid, then only, perhaps, release may be won.'

'If genuine confidence, like a beauteous cow, come by Hari's favour to dwell in the heart, countless prayers and penances and steadfast vows of continence and observances, which the Veda declares to be right and duteous conduct—these are the green grass; and when the cow grazes it, she bears and gives milk to the calf of love. Quietism is the rope, trust the vessel; the pure mind that masters itself is the milkman. Then, brother, having drawn off the milk of perfect righteousness, let a man boil it on the fire of desirelessness; let him cool it with the wind of contentment and forbearance, and make it into curd with the rennet of resolution and control. Next, in the vessel of gladness let him churn it with the churning-stick of reflection, with continence for base and true and noble speech for cord. Thus churning, let him draw forth the butter of desirelessness, pure and sweet and undefiled.'

<sup>1</sup> The parrot fancies itself entangled and caught in a string attached to a baited stick; the monkey, putting its hand into a narrow-mouthed jar, clutches the grain and cannot withdraw its closed fist. Both can in reality release themselves. Thus their capture is a picture of subjection to illusion.

[D. 117a.] 'Then making ready the fire of ascetic contemplation with the fuel of action, good and ill, let him cool with reason the *ghi* of knowledge and let the filth of selfishness be consumed. [117b.] Then let reason, that is highest wisdom, take the unsullied *ghi* and fill with it the lamp of intelligence and set it firmly on the stand of impartiality. [117c.] Next, from the cotton of the three states and the three elements drawing out the wool of the fourth state,<sup>1</sup> let him prepare it and make a wick well-compacted. [S. 117d.] So let him light the lamp, ablaze with highest wisdom, in which, if they approach the flame, all the moths of pride and other vices are consumed.

[C. 113.] "'I am That'—this unbroken mental state is the lamp's brightly burning flame. Then on the soul's experience dawns the fair light of bliss, and all distinction and error, source of rebirth, are destroyed. The deep darkness of illusion and the rest, that wait on forceful ignorance, is dispersed. Then reason finds illumination and rests in the home of the heart, and so unties the knot. If reason can thus untie the knot, this soul attains its end; but when, O king of birds, illusion knows the knot to be loosening, she creates all kinds of hindrances. Brother, she sends prosperity and success<sup>2</sup> in abundance to tempt the reason to avarice. By craft or force or fraud they draw near and extinguish the lamp with the wind of their robes. Reason, if she be very cautious, regards these as no friends and will not look upon them.

'If reason finds no hindrance in these obstacles, then again the gods create vexations. The gates of the senses are so many apertures at which the gods settle and keep watch. Then when they see a gust of sensual desire approaching, they forcibly open the doors. When that impetuous blast enters the home of the heart, the lamp of wisdom is blown out. The knot is not untied; the light is extinguished and reason is distracted by the wind of carnal desire. Knowledge pleases not the senses and their deities, their delight is ever in sensual enjoyment. When the wind of material objects has led reason astray, then who can light the lamp again as it was before? [D. 118a.] Then, king of birds, the soul experiences all manner of troubles in the mortal round. Hari's illusion is exceeding hard to traverse, an ocean none can cross. [118b.] Hard to speak of, hard to grasp and hard to practise is discernment.

<sup>1</sup> See note on B.Ch. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *riddhi-siddhi*: material prosperity and magical attainments, pictured as seductive elves.

Though it be won by chance, as the wood-louse writes,<sup>1</sup> again many obstacles arise.

[C. 114.] 'The way of knowledge is the edge of a sword; very soon one falls therefrom, O king of birds. He who treads this path and stumbles not attains to the high state of final liberation. Very hard to reach is final liberation—so say the saints, the Purāṇas, the Vedas and other scriptures. But, my lord, by the worship of Rāma that release comes unsought, spontaneously. As water cannot stand without earth beneath it, though one try a myriad means to make it, so—believe me, king of birds—apart from faith in Hari the joy of liberation cannot be assured. So thinking, wise votaries of Hari disregard release and earnestly seek after faith. As soon as one has faith, ignorance, source of rebirth, is destroyed without effort or endeavour, as food is eaten to satisfy hunger and the internal fire digests the food. Who is so foolish as to find no delight in a path so blissful and easy to tread as faith in Hari?

[D. 119a.] "I am the servant and he my master"—without this relationship, Garur, the ocean of birth and death cannot be crossed. Hold fast this doctrine and worship the lotus feet of Rāma.

[119b.] Blessed are the souls that worship Raghunāyak, in whom alone is power to make the understanding foolish and the foolish understanding.

[C. 115.] 'I have taught and told of the doctrine of knowledge; now hear of the power of the jewel of faith. Faith in Rāma is a potent talisman for him in whose heart it abides. It is pure light by night and day; there is no need of lamp or *ghī* or wick; the poverty of ignorance comes not nigh it, nor does the wind of avarice extinguish it. The darkness of forceful ignorance is dispelled, and all the swarms of moths fall back defeated. Evil lusts and all their brood approach not him in whose heart faith abides. For him poison is nectar and a foe a friend. Without that jewel no man can find happiness. Those grievous afflictions of the mind under whose spell all creatures suffer pain affect him not. He in whose heart dwells the jewel of faith in Rāma never for a moment feels the slightest pain. They wear the crown of wisdom in this world who seek this jewel with their whole endeavour. Yet though this jewel is plain to be seen in the world, no one can grasp it without the grace of Rāma. The ways to its attainment are easy, but luckless men will have none of them.'

<sup>1</sup> *ghundēchara*: the marks the wood-louse makes on the wood may by chance form intelligible letters.

'In the holy mountains of Veda and Purāṇa is many a glorious mine—the stories of Rāma; saints, Garur, can fathom them; sound reason is their pickaxe, and knowledge and continence their eyes. That man who searches with love finds the jewel of faith in the mine of perfect bliss. I am confident, lord, that the servant of Rāma is greater than Rāma himself. Rāma is the ocean, good men and steadfast are the clouds; Hari is the sandal-tree, the saints are breezes.<sup>1</sup> The reward of all endeavour is firm faith in Hari, and that no man has found without the help of the saints. He, Garur, who bears this in mind and seeks communion with the good finds faith in Hari easy of attainment.

[D. 120a.] 'Brahma<sup>2</sup> is the sea, knowledge Mandarācala and the saints the gods; they churn and bring out the nectar of Rāma's story wherein is the sweetness of faith. [120b.] Continence is the shield, knowledge the sword, and that which slays the enemy—pride, greed and ignorance—and wins the victory is faith in Hari. Behold and ponder this, O king of birds!'

[C. 116.] Then the king of birds lovingly replied, 'If you love me, gracious lord, regard me as your own true servant and answer me these seven questions. Tell me first, O resolute lord, what form is the most difficult of all to attain. Then consider and tell me in brief what is the greatest pain and what is the greatest pleasure. Next, explain the innate traits of the good and the bad, for you have deep insight into their nature. Tell me also what is the most meritorious virtue known to the scriptures and what the most deadly sin. Explain to me further the diseases of the mind, for you are all-wise and of infinite compassion.'

'Listen, my friend, with reverence and great devotion while I expound in brief these rules of moral conduct. There is no form like the form of man, a form which all creatures, moving and unmoved, most earnestly desire. It is the ladder to hell and heaven and final liberation and grants its wearer the blessings of wisdom, detachment and faith. Those who put on this body and yet worship not Hari but devote themselves to the very lowest of sensual lusts are throwing away from their hands the philosopher's stone to grasp instead fragments of common glass.'

'There is no pain in the world like poverty and no pleasure to equal the fellowship of the saints.'

<sup>1</sup> The clouds draw water from the ocean and scatter it abroad in the form of rain; the breezes shed abroad the perfume of the sandal-tree.

<sup>2</sup> Brahma: here, the Veda.

'An innate characteristic of the good, O king of birds, is to do good to others in thought and word and deed. Good men endure pain to give pleasure to others, and evil wretches to give others pain. Good men are like the birch-tree,<sup>1</sup> ready in their compassion to suffer the direst affliction if so they can help their neighbours; but the wicked are like hemp, for they bind others with ropes, and to this end flay themselves and even torture themselves to death. Hearken, Garuṇ; the wicked do harm to others, even though they have no purpose of their own to serve, like snakes and rats. They destroy their neighbours' property and are destroyed themselves, like hailstones that ruin the crops and melt away to nothing. Bad men arise in the world for its bane, like that notorious and mischievous planet Ketu; but the rising of the good, like that of the moon and the sun, ever brings blessing to all mankind.

'One's highest duty, as the scriptures declare, is to do no harm; and there is no more heinous sin than censoriousness. He who abuses Hara or his *guru* is born again as a frog and retains that form throughout a thousand lives. He who abuses a Brāhmaṇ, after suffering in many a hell, is reborn in the world in the form of a crow. Those who criticize the gods or the scriptures in their self-conceit fall into the lowest hell, while those who calumniate the good are born again as owls, loving the night of ignorance when the sun of wisdom is set; and those dull blockheads who slander everyone take birth again as bats.

'Now hear, my friend, the diseases of the mind, by which all men are afflicted. Ignorance is the root of all sicknesses, from which again spring many torments. Lust is wind; insatiable greed is phlegm; choler is bile, that continually inflames the soul; and when these three brothers form an alliance, there comes into being a painful state of general paralysis. Then there are all sorts of carnal desires that are hard to satisfy—too many to name—and these are all painful diseases. There are the ringworm of selfishness, the itch of jealousy, the swollen goitre of elation and despondency, the phthisis of envy at the sight of another's happiness, the leprosy of vice and perversity of soul, the excruciating rheumatism of egoism, the Guinea worm of hypocrisy, deceit, vanity and pride, the dreadful dropsy of greed, the fierce tertian ague of the

<sup>1</sup> By giving up its bark.

three ambitions,<sup>1</sup> the two fevers of covetousness and lack of discrimination—but why enumerate all the many diseases?

[D. 121a.] 'Men die when in the grip of only one disease, and these are many and incurable; they are constantly afflicting the creature; then how can it find rest? [121b.] There are myriads of alleviations, *Garur*,—observances, religious duties, right conduct, penances, knowledge, sacrifices, prayers and almsgiving—but these are no permanent cures. [C. 117.] All creatures in the world are sick of these diseases, preys to anxiety, elation, fear, love and bereavement. I have mentioned some of the diseases of the mind; everyone suffers from them, but only a few recognize them. These evil afflictions are slightly relieved by diagnosis but not wholly cured; they thrive on the indigestible food of sensible objects and so sprout up even in the hearts of sages; then how can poor ordinary mortals escape?

'Yet by the grace of Rāma all these diseases can be cured if the following treatment be observed. A holy *guru* must be the physician and there must be faith in his prescription; abstention from worldly objects is the regimen, devotion to Raghupati the revivifying drug and a mind full of faith its vehicle. Such treatment will assuredly heal these diseases; otherwise they will not be cured in spite of all one's efforts. Only then, my lord, may the mind be known to be healed of its disease when the soul grows ever stronger in detachment, and good sense, the appetite, grows daily keener and the weakness of material desire disappears. Then when a man bathes in the pellucid stream of knowledge, his heart is filled full of faith in Rāma. Śiva, Brahmā, Śukadeva, Sanaka and his brethren and Nārada, sages pre-eminent in apprehension of the divine, all agree, king of birds, in this doctrine—one must love the lotus feet of Rāma. Veda, Purāṇa and all the holy books proclaim that without faith in Raghupati there is no peace.

'Sooner may hair grow on the back of a tortoise, sooner may a barren woman's son commit murder, sooner may flowers of all sorts bloom in the sky than a soul find peace if it be at variance with Hari. Sooner may thirst be quenched by drinking at a mirage, or horns sprout on the head of a hare; sooner may darkness vanquish the sun than a soul at odds with Rāma find peace. Sooner may fire spring to light from snow than one at variance with Rāma find peace. [D. 122a.] Sooner may *ghī* be formed by churning water,

<sup>1</sup> See note on U.C. 105.

or oil by crushing sand, than the ocean of mortality be crossed except one worship Hari. This is an established truth.

[122b.] 'The Lord can turn a mosquito into Brahmā or make Brahmā less than a mosquito; this the prudent recognize and worship Rāma, laying aside all doubt.

[Sloka 3.] 'I declare to you this indisputable fact, and what I say is true, that men who worship Hari traverse the ocean very hard to cross.

[C. 118.] 'I have told you, my lord, as best I can, of the matchless acts of Hari, some at length and some in brief; this, O Garuṭ, is the conclusion of the scriptures, that all else must be abandoned and Rāma only worshipped. Whom else should one worship but the Lord Raghupati, who has shown such affection for a fool like myself? You, my lord, are the image of divine wisdom and in you is no ignorance, and you have shown me this great favour, that you have asked me for the most holy story of Rāma, that gladdens the souls of Śukadeva, Sanaka and his brethren and Śambhu. The company of the good is rarely enjoyed in this world, be it for a moment or an hour or a single day. See, Garuṭ, and inwardly consider whether I am fit to worship Raghubir; meanest of birds am I and altogether foul, yet all the world knows that the Lord has made me pure.'

[D. 123a.] 'Meanest of the mean though I be, yet blessed, yea, blessed am I this day that Rāma has granted me as his own faithful servant the fellowship of a saint! [123b.] O king, I have told you everything to the best of my ability, nor have I hidden or kept aught back; but the acts of Raghunāyak are an ocean whose depths no man can sound.'

[C. 119.] As he thought on Rāma's many excellent perfections, the wise Bhūṣundi rejoiced again and yet again: 'He whose greatness the Vedas have called "Not thus", he whose might and power and lordship are unrivalled, Raghurāj whose feet are worshipped by Śiva and Brahmā, has proved his perfect tenderness of heart by showing mercy to me! Nowhere have I seen or heard of such loving-kindness; to whom, then, king of birds, should I liken Raghupati? Aspirants, adepts, the liberated, anchorites, poets, scholars, men of action and wandering mendicants, ascetics, heroes, great penitents, wise men, religious devotees, doctors and mystics find not salvation unless they worship my master. Rāma I adore, I adore, I adore! The imperishable I adore, by seeking sanctuary with whom even such guilt-stained sinners as myself are purified!'

[D. 124a.] 'May that gracious Lord, whose name heals men of the ills of rebirth and banishes the three grievous pains, ever show favour to you and to me!'

[124b.] When he heard Bhuśundi's propitious prayer, and marked his love for Rāma's feet, Garur, all doubts resolved, spoke a loving word: [C. 120] 'Now that I have heard your discourse, so full of the savour of faith in Raghubir, I am well satisfied. I feel a fresh devotion to the feet of Rāma and all my troubles, born of illusion, have vanished. You have been a boat to rescue me as I sank in the sea of ignorance, and, lord, have bestowed on me manifold blessings. I can never pay my debt of gratitude; I do repeated homage to your feet. All your desires are fulfilled; you love Rāma with intense devotion; none so blessed, father, as yourself! Saints, trees, rivers, mountains and the earth all work for the good of others. Poets have said that the hearts of saints are like butter, but they have missed the truth of the matter; for butter melts of its own heat, but the most holy saints melt when another is tried in the fire. The object of my life, the end for which I was born, has been attained, and by your favour all my doubts have disappeared. Regard me ever as your servant.' So, Umā, spoke the noble bird again and yet again. [D. 125a.] The resolute Garur affectionately bowed his head before Bhuśundi's feet and then departed to Vaikuntha with Raghubir in his heart.

[125b.] O Girijā, there is no blessing like that of fellowship with the saints; and, as Veda and Purāṇa declare, that is only possible if Hari lend his grace.

[C. 121.] I have told you the supremely sacred story, by the hearing of which the bonds of birth and death are loosened and there springs up devotion to the lotus feet of Rāma, the tree of Paradise to the suppliant, abounding in compassion. For those who listen to this story with attentive ear and mind all sins of thought and word and deed are blotted out. Pilgrimages and all other religious practices, austerity, detachment, a high degree of wisdom, the various pious works and duties, vows, almsgiving, self-governance and temperance, prayer, penance and sacrifice, mercy shown to living creatures, service rendered to Brāhmans and gurus and the exaltation of learning, modesty and sound judgement, in short, all means to the perfect end that the Vedas have prescribed, Bhavāni, have faith in Hari as their one reward. But few are they who have won to that devotion to Raghunāth of which the scriptures speak, and then only by the grace of Rāma.

[D. 126.] That faith in Hari to which sages scarce attain those win without effort who continually listen to this story and put their trust therein.

[C. 122.] He is the man of perfect wisdom, learning and accomplishment, the doctor and philanthropist of whom the world may well be proud, the pious devotee and saviour of his house, whose soul is utterly devoted to Rāma's feet. He is the master of moral philosophy and perfect understanding, skilled expert in Vedic doctrines, poet, scholar and staunch warrior who worships Raghubir with unfeigned devotion.

Blessed is that land where Gangā flows! Blessed is the wife who is faithful to her husband! Blessed is the king whose rule is just! Blessed the Brāhmaṇ who swerves not from his duty! Blessed is the wealth that is dispensed in charity!<sup>1</sup> Blessed the mind that steadfastly devotes itself to works of merit! Blessed the hour of communion with the saints! Blessed the life perpetually devoted to the Brāhmaṇs! [D. 127.] Hearken, O Umā; blessed is that house, to be revered throughout the world and truly holy, in which is born a humble votary of the Lord Raghubir!

[C. 123.] I have told you the story as well as I can, though at first I kept it secret. It was when I perceived the extreme devotion of your soul that I recited the story of Raghupati. It should not be repeated to the wicked or the stubborn or those who refuse to listen attentively to Hari's sportive acts; nor yet to the greedy, passionate or lustful, or those who worship not the Lord of all creation. It must never be repeated to one who treats Brāhmaṇs with malice, even though he be as powerful a sovereign as the king of heaven. Those are fit hearers of Rāma's story who dearly love the fellowship of the saints; those, too, may hear it who are devoted to their *guru*'s feet and walk in righteous ways and minister to Brāhmaṇs. But above all does he delight in this story who loves the Lord Raghurāī as he loves his own life. [D. 128.] Let him who would seek devotion to Rāma's feet or the blessed state of liberation devoutly drink in this story from the cups of his ears.

[C. 124.] I have told you, O Girijā, the story of Rāma that cleanses the Kaliyuga of its impurity and washes away the defilement of the mind, the story that is a life-giving specific for the disease of rebirth, hymned by the scriptures and the learned. Herein are

<sup>1</sup> *dhana prathama gati*: *dāna*, almsgiving. The other two *gatis* are *bhoga*, self-indulgence, and *nāśa*, wasteful extravagance.

seven beautiful steps, ways to lead up to faith in Raghupati. He who enjoys Hari's special favour sets his feet upon this road. Those who sing this story with sincere devotion win success in all their soul desires; and those who recite and listen to it and gladly accept it pass over the sea of birth and death as though it were a puddle.

Girijā was overjoyed to have heard the whole story and exclaimed in delight, 'By my Lord's grace my doubts are resolved and my love for Rāma's feet has sprung up afresh! Lord of the world, now by your favour am I fully satisfied. All my troubles have vanished and an unwavering devotion to Rāma has arisen in my heart.'

[C. 125.] (This blessed converse between Śambhu and Umā is pregnant with bliss and destructive of sorrow. It loosens the bonds of birth and death and dispels all doubt. It gladdens the hearts of the faithful and is beloved of good men. There is nothing in the world so dear as this to all the worshippers of Rāma. By Raghupati's grace I have told, as well as I am able, these holy and marvellous acts. In this Kaliyuga there is no other means of grace; austerity, sacrifice, prayer, penance, vows and ritual worship are all of no avail. Meditate only on Rāma; sing only of Rāma; listen only and always to the sum of Rāma's perfections! O soul, abandon crooked ways and worship him whose special property is to sanctify the fallen, as poets, scriptures, saints and Purānas declare. Who has not found salvation by the worship of Rāma?

[Ch. 14.] Hearken, O foolish soul! Who has not found salvation by worshipping Rāma, who sanctifies the fallen? He saved the harlot,<sup>1</sup> Ajāmila, the huntsman, the vulture, the elephant and many another wicked wretch; an Ābhīr, too, a Yavana, a Kirāt, a Khaśa, a Cāndal, and all who are most defiled by sin are purified if they repeat but once the name of Rāma whom I adore. Those who recite and listen to and sing this story of the jewel of the house of Raghu wash away the pollution of the Kaliyuga and the defilement of the soul and depart without effort to Rāma's home. He who appreciates the beauty of only five or six *caupāis*<sup>2</sup> and stores them up

<sup>1</sup> See App., s.v. Piṅgalā.

<sup>2</sup> *sata pañca*: some interpret: 'considering the *caupāis* to be the *true council of five*, appointed to determine what should be done and what should not'. Others, taking *sata* as *sata*, rather forcedly render the phrase '5,100 *caupāis*', as being roughly the number in the poem.

in his heart is delivered by the Lord Raghubar from the disorders created by the five fearful kinds of ignorance. Rāma alone is beautiful, wise and gracious, and looks with love upon the destitute. Who else does such unselfish good or grants the final blessedness? Nowhere is there a Lord like Rāma, by the least atom of whose grace even this stupid Tulasi Dās has attained to perfect peace.

[D. 130a.] There is none so lowly as I, and none, O Raghubir, so helpful to the lowly as thyself. Remember this, O jewel of the house of Raghu, and save me from the sore pain of rebirth! [130b.] As a lover loves his mistress and a miser loves his wealth, even so, O Ragunāth, O Rāma, mayest thou for ever and ever be beloved by me!

[Śloka 4.] Inasmuch as in former days the holy Lord Śambhu, that glorious bard, composed a Rāmāyaṇa, hard to understand, for the attainment of perpetual faith in the lotus feet of the blessed Lord Rāma, Tulasi Dās, holding that poem to be instinct with the name of Raghnāth, has written this Holy Lake in the vulgar tongue in order to dispel the darkness of his inner self. Those who plunge with faith into this Holy Lake of Rāma's Acts, a lake of merit, sin-destroying, ever blessing the soul and granting faith and wisdom, which by its pure, clear waters full of love washes away the filth of ignorance and illusion, are not scorched by the burning rays of the sun of birth and death.)



## APPENDIX

**Ābhira.** Ahir, or cowherd, of mixed caste, whose salvation by Rāma is cited as an example of his mercy (U.Ch. 14). An obscure passage in S.C. 60 is explained by a reference to Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Ocean complained that impure Ābhiras to the north defiled his waters by drinking of streams that flowed into the sea, and asked Rāma to dry up their waters with an arrow of fire. Rāma complied, but at the same time blessed their lands with perpetual fertility.

**Aditi.** Devamātā, or mother of the gods (B.C. 31). The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* calls her the daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Kaśyapa, by whom she became the mother of Indra and of Viṣṇu as Vāmana. In B.C. 123 she is identified with Kausalyā. Her name suggests that she is the personification of the boundless heaven, mother of the seven or more Ādityas, of whom Varuna was chief.

**Agastya.** A celebrated *rishi* who lived in a hermitage south of the Vindhya range. He was born in a water-jar, and was therefore called Kumbhaja, Ghaṭayoni, Ghaṭasambhava, etc. Rāma visited him (Ar.C. 11-12) and the seer advised him to go to Pañcavati. In B.C. 3 he is numbered among those who attributed their reformation to the company of the good. In A.C. 297 reference is made to one of the many stories told of Agastya. The sun was checked in its course by the lofty peaks of the Vindhya range. Agastya, the *guru* of those mountains, therefore visited the range, which bowed its head before his feet. The seer thereupon commanded the mountain to remain in that position till he returned, and then went away, never to come back. Another legend tells that when Indra slew Vṛitāsura, the other demons fled and hid in the sea, coming out by night and working havoc in the hermitages of the seers. The gods begged Agastya to drink up the sea; he did so and the demons were thus exposed and slain (B.C. 32: B.C. 253: U.C. 33).

**Agni.** The god of fire, one of the chief Vedic deities. He was considered to be the mediator between men and gods, the protector of men and their homes and the witness of their actions, and was specially invoked at marriages and other solemn ceremonies. He appears (B.C. 188) at the sacrifice performed to ensure the birth of a son to Daśaratha, and again (L.Ch. 33) when he brings Sītā out of the purifying fire. He has many names, e.g. Anala, Pāvaka.

**Ahalyā.** A very beautiful woman made by Brahmā and given as wife to the *rishi* Gautama. Indra, being jealous, visited her in Gautama's absence and seduced her. The seer, learning what had happened, cursed Indra, causing a thousand holes to appear

in his body, which later became eyes (see B.C. 314); he also cursed Ahalyā, turning her into a stone until Rāma should come and restore her to her proper form. There are other versions of the story, in which no mention is made of the stone, but the above is the version adopted by Tulasī Dās (B.C. 208ff.).

**Ahirāja.** King of serpents, i.e. Śesanāga, q.v.

**Aja.** The unborn, i.e. Brahmā, q.v.

**Ajāmila.** A Brāhmaṇa of Kanauj, who married a harlot and became a great sinner. One day a *siddhū* came to his house in his absence and was hospitably received by his wife. The *siddhū* told her she should have a son and must call him Nārāyaṇa. When Ajāmila was about to die, he was terrified by the sight of Yama's messengers and called for his beloved son by name. Hearing him call on Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu's messengers came and took him to heaven (B.C. 26: U.Ch. 14).

**Akāmpana.** One of Rāvaṇa's demon warriors, who brought him the news of the death of Khara (B.D. 180).

**Aksaya.** A son of Rāvaṇa, slain by Hanumān (S.C. 18).

**Amarāvatī.** Indra's capital.

**Ainbarisa.** A king of Ayodhyā, six generations prior to Daśaratha. For his connexion with Durvāsā (A.C. 265) see Durvāsā.

**Amhikā.** Pārvatī, q.v.

**Anala.** Agni, q.v.

**Anaṅga.** The Bodiless; a name given to Kāmadeva after he had been consumed by Śiva's eye. See Kāmadeva.

**Ananta.** Śesanāga, q.v.

**Anasūyā.** The saintly and venerable wife of Atri. By the power of her austerities she brought the sacred river Mandākini to flow by Citrakūṭa (A.C. 132). When Rāma visited Atri's hermitage, she instructed Sītā in wifely duties and gave her celestial garments and jewels (Ar.C. 4-S. 5b).

**Āngada.** The son of Bāli, the Monkey King of Kiśkindhā, who was slain by Rāma. Bāli's brother, Sugrīva, was crowned king in his stead and Āngada was made Crown Prince. Angada went as envoy to Rāvaṇa and took a prominent part in the battle of Lankā.

**Apsarā.** A celestial nymph. Vālmīki and the Purāṇas attribute their origin to the churning of the Ocean of Milk (see Viṣṇu). Neither gods nor demons would marry them, so they became promiscuous mistresses, especially among the Gandharvas. They are often referred to as dancing, fascinating heroes, and attempting by their charms to wean ascetics from their austerities, as Rāmbhā in the story of Nārada (B.C. 126). They are also called Nākanati or Surabadhū.

**Arimardana.** The son of king Satyaketu and brother of Pratāpabhānu, whose story is told in B.C. 153-C. 176. When Pratāpabhānu, owing to his unwitting sin, was born again as Rāvaṇa, Arimardana was born as his brother, the voracious demon Kumbhakarṇa.

**Arundhati.** The wife of Vasiṣṭha, regarded as a model of conjugal excellence. She accompanied Bharata on his journey to Rāma in the forest (A.C. 187).

**Asamaśara.** One who has an odd number of arrows, i.e. Kāmadeva, whose arrows are five in number. See Kāmadeva.

**Aśvinikumāra.** Twin sons of Sūrya and a nymph, Prabhā, in the form of a mare. Many hymns are addressed to them in the Vedas. They are luminous harbingers of dawn in the morning sky, young, swift and handsome, riding in a golden car drawn by horses or birds. They are also celestial physicians, actively benevolent and able to heal and rejuvenate mortals. They are mentioned in L.C. 15 as Rāma's nostrils.

**Atikāya.** One of Rāvana's demon warriors (B.D. 180).

**Atri.** A great sage, visited by Rāma in the forest (A.C. 132). He helped Bharata deposit the water brought for Rāma's coronation in the Bharata-kūpa (A.C. 308ff.). He composed many Vedic hymns and was later regarded as one of the ten Prajāpatis. He is one of the *saptarishi*, or stars of the Great Bear. His wife was Anasūyā and his sons Soma, Durvāsā and Dattatreya.

**Avadha.** Rāma's capital, Ayodhyā, or the district of which Ayodhyā is the principal town, situated on the R. Sarayū.

**Avanikumāri.** Daughter of earth, i.e. Sītā, with reference to her origin. See Sītā.

**Badarivana.** Badarikāśrama, a very sacred place of pilgrimage in Garhwāl, on the west bank of the R. Alakananda. It is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as a source of the R. Ganges, with one hot and one cold stream running over golden sand (K.D. 25).

**Bali.** The son of Virocana and grandson of Prahlāda. For the story of Bali and Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as Vāmana, see Viṣṇu. He is mentioned (A.C. 30) as true to his promise at the cost of his dominions, and (K.D. 29) in connexion with the above story.

**Bāli.** The Monkey King of Kiśkindhā, who drove out his brother Sugriva and was slain by Rāma. The story is told in K.C. 1ff. He was the son of Indra and father of Āṅgada. In the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* an account is given of Rāvana's alliance with Bāli, reference to which is made in L.C. 20. Āṅgada's reference (L.C. 24) to Rāvana's discomfiture by Bāli is explained in a spurious passage in the *Bālakāṇḍa* Rāvana challenged Bāli as he sat in meditation at Paimpāpura; Bāli attempted to pacify him but, failing to do so, kept him nipped under his arms for some months.

**Bhagiratha.** The son of Dilipa. By the power of severe austerities he brought the Ganges down from heaven to purify the ashes of the 60,000 sons of Sagara who had cleft the earth in their search for a stolen sacrificial horse and had been blasted by Kapila. Hence the Ganges is also called Bhagirathi. The story is told at length in the *Bālakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. (See A.C. 209.)

**Bhānupratāpa.** Pratāpabhānu, q.v.

Bharadvāja. A *rishi* to whom many Vedic hymns are attributed and about whom many stories are told. He was the son of Vṛihaspati and Māmatā and is found in this poem at a hermitage in the sacred place of pilgrimage, Prayāga, where he listens to the story of Rāma as recited by Yājñavalkya (B.C. 30). He is visited by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā and sets them on their way (A.C. 106ff.), and later entertains Bharata and his host at a magic feast (A.C. 206-C. 216). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is said to be a pupil of Vālmīki.

Bharata. The son of Daśaratha by his wife Kaikeyī. The story of his mother's wicked plot to secure Bharata's succession to the throne and of Bharata's devotion to his brother Rāma is told in the poem.

Bhārati. Sarasvatī, q.v.

Bhava. Śiva, q.v.

Bhavāni. Pārvatī, q.v.

Bhilla (fem. Bhillini). Probably the modern Bhils, an aboriginal race inhabiting the Vindhya mountains, the forests of Mālwā and Mewā, and regions to the north of Poona.

Bhogavati. The subterranean capital of the Nāgas in Pātāla. The *Rāmāyaṇa* places it far to the south of Laṅkā as one of the cities which the monkeys must search for Sītā. Laṅkā is compared to Bhogavati for luxury and splendour (B.C. 178).

Bṛigu. A Vedic seer, numbered among the *saptarṣi*, or stars of the Great Bear. He is one of the Prajāpatis and founder of the Bhārgavas; an ancestor of Paraśurāma. He officiated at Dakṣa's sacrifice and preserved it from destruction by Śiva's servants (B.D. 64). In L.Ch. 11 reference is made to the mark on Rāma's breast caused by Bṛigu's foot. The following story is told in the *Padma Purāṇa*:—The *rishis*, assembled at a sacrifice, disputed as to which deity was best entitled to a Brāhmaṇa's homage. Bṛigu was sent to test the characters of Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu. He could not gain access to Śiva because he was engaged with his wife; Brahmā he found surrounded by sages and too self-important to attend to him. Both these deities he cursed. He found Viṣṇu asleep and stamped on his breast with his left foot to awaken him. Instead of being offended, Viṣṇu gently pressed Bṛigu's foot and said that he was honoured by its contact. Pleased by his humility, Bṛigu proclaimed that Viṣṇu was the only deity worthy of worship, and the seers agreed with his verdict.

In B.C. 147 the mark of Bṛigu's foot is called the Srivatsa.

Bṛigukulaketu, Bṛigunātha, Bṛigunāyaka. Paraśudhara, q.v.

Bṛiṅgi. A servant of Śiva (B.C. 93).

Bhusundi. The crow who became a votary of Rāma after confining his worship to Śiva. He became a crow as a punishment, but preferred to remain in that mean form because it was as a crow that he first heard the story of Rāma and learnt to worship him (U.D. 114a.). In B.C. 30 he is said to have heard the story from Śiva and to have recited it to Yājñavalkya. He relates

his adventures in former lives to Garuḍa and repeats the story of Rāma to resolve his doubts in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. This does not occur in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Brahmā. The first member of the Hindu *trimūrti*, sprung from the mundane egg deposited by the supreme First Cause, and the father of all creatures. When he has created the world, it remains unchanged for 4,320,000,000 years, a period known as a Day of Brahmā. The world is then destroyed and restored. When this process has been repeated for a hundred of his years, he expires and with all the gods and sages and the whole universe is resolved into his constituent elements. He is now only worshipped at a temple of Puṣkara as a punishment for his cavalier treatment of Bhṛigu (q.v.). His consort is Sarasvatī and he rides on a swan or goose (*hamsa*). Some scriptures (e.g. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Viṣṇu* and *Liṅga Purāṇa*) seem to regard Brahmā as the deity incarnate in those forms ordinarily regarded as incarnations of Viṣṇu. The epics represent him as springing from the navel of Viṣṇu or from a lotus that grew from it.

Saiva scriptures make Brahmā inferior to Śiva, or Rudra, by whom he was created; he acts as Rudra's charioteer and worships the *linga*. Vaiṣnavas, on the other hand, regard both Brahmā and Śiva as far inferior to Viṣṇu; thus many passages in this poem speak of Viṣṇu as worshipped by Brahmā and Śiva, and in L.Ch. 34 Brahmā praises Rāma and confesses his own unworthiness.

He has many names, of which the following occur in this poem:—  
Aja (unborn); Caturānana (four-faced); Vidhi, Vidhātā and Virañci (creator and disposer).

Brahmāṇi. Sarasvatī, q.v.

Candramā. The sage who told Saṃpāti that when he helped Rāma's scouts to find Sītā, his wings, which had been burnt by his approach to the sun, would grow again (K.C. 28). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is called Niśākara, another name for the moon.

Caturānana. Four-faced, an epithet of Brahmā, q.v. It is related in the *Matsya Purāṇa* that he fell in love with a beautiful maiden sprung from his own body. She began to circle round him, and his four faces came into being so that he could look on her on whichever side she might be.

Cirañjivi. The sage Mārkandeya. The allusion in A.C. 286 is thus explained:—He once asked Nārāyaṇa to show him what the final dissolution of the world would be like. In response to his request the god caused a universal flood to arise. The sage tried to swim, but was just about to drown when he saw the *aksaya-bata*, or imperishable fig-tree, at Prayāga standing above the waters, with Viṣṇu as a little child seated on the topmost bough. The child rescued the sage as he was sinking in the flood.

Citraketu. A king of Śurasena, mentioned in B.C. 79 as having been ruined by dealings with Nārada. The allusion is explained by the following legend:—King Citraketu had a thousand (or, as

some say, ten million) wives, but was childless. At last, by the blessing of the seer Āngirā, the youngest queen bore him a son. When the boy was one year old, the other queens, being jealous, poisoned him. Citraketu was weeping over his dead son when Āngirā and Nārada came and summoned the boy's spirit to return to the body; whereupon the spirit explained that he had been a king in a former life; he had retired to the forest, where a woman had given him a cake of fuel which he had burnt. But the fuel had contained a number of ants, and these had been born again as Citraketu's wives and had taken vengeance on him by poisoning him; his own mother had been the woman who had given him the fuel. The spirit again quitted the body, and Citraketu left his kingdom and went to the forest to do penance.

**Citrakūta.** A place of pilgrimage, rendered sacred by the sojourn of Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. A description of it is given in A.C. 132ff. The hill of Citrakūta is in the district of Bāndā, 54 miles south of Prayāga. At its base the R. Payoṣṇi flows into the Jumna and has for a tributary the R. Mandākini, which Anasūyā is said to have brought there by the power of her austerities. The hill is especially frequented by pilgrims during the festivals of Rāma-navamī (the day of Rāma's birth) and Divālī.

**Dadhīci.** A Vedic *rishi*. An early story relates that Indra taught him certain mystical doctrines and threatened to kill him if he revealed them. The Asvins cut off and hid his head, replacing it by that of a horse, and then persuaded him to teach them the mysteries. When Indra heard of it, he cut off Dadhīci's equine head, and the Asvins again set his own head on his body. A later story tells how Indra, while vainly attempting to overcome the demon Vṛittra, learnt that victory could only be won by the use of Dadhīci's bones fashioned into thunderbolts. He therefore asked the seer for his bones; and so far from resenting Indra's past hostility, Dadhīci willingly surrendered his bones, with which Indra conquered the demon. Reference is made to Dadhīci's self-sacrifice in A.C. 30 and A.D. 179, where the effect (the thunderbolt) is said to be harder than the cause (the bone).

**Dadhimukha.** A monkey in Rāma's army. He is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as the guardian of Madhuvana, a fruit garden raided by the triumphant monkeys (S.D. 54 and see S.C. 28).

**Dakṣa.** A son of Brahmā and chief of the Prajāpatis. Many inconsistent accounts are given of his origin, and the story of his sacrifice (B.C. 60ff.) is given in various scriptures in different forms; in the *Mahābhārata*, for example, Śiva furiously pierces the offering with an arrow, and in the Purāṇas, as in this poem, he sends Virabhadra and thousands of demigods to break up the sacrifice and put all the participant gods to rout until Dakṣa acknowledges his supremacy.

The reason why Dakṣa did not invite Śiva to the sacrifice is said to be his annoyance at an insult offered to him in the

assembly of the gods, when Śiva refused to rise from his seat to greet his entry (B.C. 62).

The reference to the advice given by Nārada to Dakṣa's sons in B.C. 79 is explained thus:—Dakṣa bade his many sons multiply the race, but Nārada persuaded them not to do so but to perform penance instead of returning home. Dakṣa therefore pronounced a curse upon Nārada, that he should always be a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth (B.C. 125).

Dakṣasutā. Pārvatī, as Sati, daughter of Dakṣa, who burnt herself at her father's sacrifice (see Dakṣa).

Dāṇḍaka. An extensive forest, lying between the Vindhya range and the Godāvari. It was cursed by Śukrācārya, whose daughter, Arajā, had been violated by Dāṇḍa, its king. It was overrun by demons, and Rāma was bidden by Agastya to purify the forest and annul the curse (Ar.C. 12). It was here that the mutilation of Śūrpanakhā and the rape of Sītā took place.

Danujāri. Enemy of the *danujas*, gigantic demons, sons of Danu, one of Dakṣa's daughters. An epithet of Viṣṇu.

Daśaratha. The king of Ayodhyā and father of Rāma.

Devahūti. The daughter of Svayambhuva Manu and Śatarūpā, wife of Kardama and mother of Kapila, founder of the Sāṃkhya school of philosophy (B.C. 142).

Dhanada, Dhaneśa. Kuvera, q.v.

Dharmaruci. Pratāpabhānu's minister, reborn as Vibhiṣana (B.C. 154).

Dhenumati. The river Gomati, q.v. (B.C. 143).

Dhruva. The son of Uttānapāda and grandson of Svayambhuva Manu (B.C. 142). He is cited in B.C. 26 as one who was exalted by repeating the name of Hari in distress. His step-mother, Suruci, treated him with contempt and claimed the succession for her own son. Dhruva submitted and undertook a rigid course of austerities. Pleased by his devotion, Viṣṇu raised him to the skies as the pole-star; but before occupying this position he returned home and reigned for some time.

Dhūmaketu. One of Rāvaṇa's warrior demons (B.D. 180).

Diti. A daughter of Dakṣa and mother of the Daityas, among whom are numbered Hiranyākṣa, whom Viṣṇu slew as the Boar, and Hiranyakāśipu, whom he slew as Narasiṁha. Maṇḍodari reminds Rāvaṇa of these triumphs (L.C. 6).

Dundubhi. The obscure reference to Dundubhi's bones and the palm-trees in K.C. 7 is explained by the following story in the *Kiśkindhakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Dundubhi, a huge and fearful demon, father of Māyāvi, whom Bāli slew in the cavern, after challenging Ocean and Himālaya to combat without success, defied Bāli to come out and fight. Bāli slew Dundubhi, who had taken the form of a monstrous bull, and hurled his blood-bespattered body some miles away. Some drops of blood fell near the hermitage of a saint, Matanga, who in his fury forbade

Bāli and his friends to enter his domain; that is why Sugrīva was able to dwell securely on Rīṣyamūka.

When Sugrīva doubted whether Rāma could overcome Bāli, Rāma proved his strength by hurling the monster's bones to a distance of several leagues. But Sugrīva was not satisfied, for Bāli had been weary with fighting and yet had been able to cast away the whole body, flesh and all. He therefore challenged him to shoot an arrow through the trunk of a tree as Bāli had done; whereupon Rāma shot a single arrow through seven palm-trees, the hill behind them and the worlds below; the arrow then returned to Rāma's quiver.

**Durgā.** Originally a virgin goddess worshipped by the wild tribes of the Vindhya range; later identified with Pārvatī, q.v.

**Durmukha.** One of Rāvana's demon warriors (L.C. 62).

**Durvāsā.** A son of Atri, famous for his irascible temper. A.C. 218 and A.C. 265 allude to the story of his dealings with Ambarīṣa. King Ambarīṣa was a devotee of Viṣṇu and excited the jealousy of the Saiva Durvāsā, who took the following occasion to curse the king. On the occasion of a certain festival Durvāsā brought with him 88,000 seers and craved hospitality of Ambarīṣa. He then went off to bathe and was so late in returning that the king drank some water with the Brāhmaṇas' leave. Durvāsā was furious and plucked a hair and threw it on the ground, where it became a Kṛityā, or malicious magical creation, which attacked the king. But Viṣṇu pursued Durvāsā with his fiery discus all over the world and up into heaven and gave him no rest till he had asked pardon of Ambarīṣa.

In Ar.C. 31 Kabandha (q.v.) says that he was cursed by Durvāsā.

**Dūṣapā.** A brother of Rāvana, who with Khara and Triśira and an army of 14,000 demons attacked Rāma after Śūrpaṇakhā's nose and ears had been cut off. He and his army were slain by Rāma single-handed (Ar.C. 17-D. 20).

**Dvivida.** A monkey warrior in Rāma's army (S.D. 54). He is said in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to be a son of one of the Aśvins.

**Gada.** A monkey warrior in Rāma's army (S.D. 54).

**Gādhisūna, Gādhitanaya.** The son of Gādhi, Viśvāmitra, q.v.

**Gajānana, Gajavadana.** Elephant-faced, an epithet of Ganeśa, q.v.

**Gālava.** A pupil of Viśvāmitra. The allusion in A.D. 61 is explained by the following story:—When Gālava's studies were concluded, he wished to make his *guru* the customary present, but Viśvāmitra refused to accept one. Gālava, however, persisted, and Viśvāmitra, angered by his obstinacy, told him to bring him 800 white horses, each with one black ear. Gālava asked the advice of king Yayāti, who gave him his daughter, Mādhavī, who had the property of remaining a virgin even after conception. Gālava obtained 200 horses each from three kings in return for sons by Mādhavī; he then gave Viśvāmitra the 600 horses,

and added Mādhavi in lieu of the remaining 200. The *guru* accepted the gift and had a son by Mādhavi named Aṣṭaka.

Gaṇanāyaka, Gaṇapa, Gaṇapati, Gaṇarāū. Ganeśa, q.v.

Gandharva. Various accounts are given of the origin of the Gandharvas. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states that they were born from Brahmā, or, alternatively, the offspring of Kaśyapa and Aristā; the *Harivamśa* that they sprang from Brahmā's nose. They appear in the Veda as deities who reveal divine truth, guard and prepare the *soma* juice and have a mystic power over women. Later, they are said to be skilled physicians and to regulate the asterisms. In the Epics they dwell in Amarāvatī and are singers and musicians who attend the banquets of Indra and the gods; there are indications, also, in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that they were warriors who fought for Indra in his battles. Their chief was Citraratha, and the Apsarās were their mistresses. Gaṅgā. The river Ganges, which flows from the Himālayas to the Bay of Bengal. Hindus regard it as the most sacred of all rivers, daughter of Himālaya and Menā. The river originally flowed in heaven, but was brought down to earth by Bhagiratha (q.v.), being caught on the way by Śiva's coils of hair (B.C. 34). On its way to purify the ashes of Sagara's sons it was swallowed by the sage Jahnū, who released it at Bhagiratha's behest; hence the river is called Jāhnavi. Owing to the Hindu belief that the river flows in three streams—in heaven, on earth and in the lower regions—it is called Tripathagā. Some of the most famous places of pilgrimage are situated on its banks—Haridvāra, Kāśī and Prayāga. When Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā crossed the river, Sītā did obeisance to the river-goddess, who blessed her (A.C. 103—A.D. 103 and L.C. 117). As the 'river of the gods' it is called Surasari, Surasarita, Devadhuni, etc.

Ganeśa. Lord of the troops of inferior deities, especially those attendant on Śiva, his father. The god of wisdom and remover of obstacles, always propitiated at the beginning of any important undertaking (A.D. 208) and invoked on the first page of a book (B. Śloka). He is represented as short and fat, with a protuberant belly, four hands holding a noose, an axe, a goad and a lotus, and the head of an elephant with one tusk and three eyes. He rides upon a rat.

Various legends account for his elephant head. It is said, for example, that his mother, Pārvati, was so proud of him that she asked Sani to look at him; but Śani's ill-omened glance burnt his head to ashes and it had to be replaced by the first that came to hand, which happened to be the head of an elephant. The loss of one tusk is variously attributed to a fight with Paraśurāma, with Rāvaṇa, with Virabhadra or with Kārttikeya.

The allusion in B.C. 19 is explained by the following story:—One day the gods were disputing as to which of them should be accounted most worthy of worship. Brahmā suggested that they should race round the world, the winner to be held the greatest.

Gaṇeśa rode upon his rat and was left far behind. Nārada, perceiving his distress, advised him to write the name of Rāma on the ground, circle it and return to Brahmā. This he did and was accounted the winner, inasmuch as the name of Rāma included in itself the whole universe.

Gaṇeśa bears many names; as lord of hosts, Ganarāū, Ganapa, Ganapati, Gapanāyaka; as elephant-headed, Gajānana, Gajavadana; and as remover of obstacles, Vināyaka.

**Garura.** The king of birds, son of Kaśyapa and Vinatā (hence called Vainateya). He has the head, wings, talons and beak of an eagle or vulture and the body and limbs of a man. His face is white, his wings red and his body golden, and he is Viṣṇu's steed. He is the chief enemy of serpents, his hatred of them having been inherited from his mother (see Vinatā).

Garura appears in this poem as sent by Nārada to devour the serpents with which Rāma has allowed himself to be bound when Meghanāda shot his magic shafts (L.C. 73ff.), and again in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* as listening to the story of Rāma recited by Kākabhuṣundi.

As king of the birds he is called Khageśa, Khagapati, etc.; as Viṣṇu's steed, Hariyānā; and as the enemy and devourer of serpents, Uragāri, Pannagāri, Uragāda, etc.

**Gauri.** Pārvatī, q.v.

**Gauriśa.** Śiva, q.v.

**Gautama.** Husband of Ahalyā, q.v.

**Gayā.** A sacred city in Magadha, or Bihār, chiefly famous for its connexion with Buddha and as a place where *śrāddha* must be performed to secure the liberation of ancestors. It is mentioned in A.C. 43 as being like fair words in the mouth of the wicked queen Kaikeyī, inasmuch as Magadha is accounted impure.

**Ghananāda.** Meghanāda, q.v.

**Ghaṭasambhava,** Ghaṭayoni. Agastya, q.v.

**Girā.** Sarasvatī, q.v.

**Girijā,** Girinandini. Pārvatī, q.v.

**Girinātha,** Giriśa. Himālaya, q.v.

**Godāvari.** A river rising near Nāsik and flowing into the Bay of Bengal. It was by the Godāvari that the mutilation of Śūrpānakhā and the rape of Sītā took place.

**Gomati.** A tributary of the Ganges, rising near Shāhjahānpur.

**Govinda.** Cow-finder, or herdsman. A common title for Viṣṇu as Kṛiṣṇa (Ar.Ch. 8). Commentators interpret the name in various ways, e.g. Only to be known by scriptural authority.

**Guha.** King of the Niṣādas (q.v.). He was a friend of Rāma in spite of his low caste, received him hospitably at Śringavera and accompanied him on part of his journey.

**Haladhara,** or Balarāma. The elder brother of Kṛiṣṇa, brought up with him by their foster-mother Yaśodā. The two syllables of the name of Rāma are said to be as sweet to the tongue as these two boys to Yaśodā (B.C. 20).

**Hanumān.** In the *Bälakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* the gods are bidden marry and beget semi-divine monkeys to help Rāma in his battle with the demons of Lankā. Hanumān, the faithful minister of Sugriva and beloved friend of Rāma, was the son of Vāta, the Wind, capable of swift flight and prodigious leaps. The story of his birth is told in the *Kiśkindhākāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He plays a prominent part in the story, leaping to Lankā to find Sītā and burn the town, performing valiant exploits in the battle and fetching the mountain with its healing herbs when Lakṣmaṇa is wounded.

Hanumān is a favourite object of worship and the patron deity of wrestlers. As Son of the Wind he is called in this poem Pavanasuta, Pavanakumāra, Pavanatanaya, Mārutasuta, Samirakumāra, Vātajāta and Prabhañjanajāyā.

**Hara.** Śiva, q.v.

**Hari.** Viṣṇu, q.v.

**Hariścandra.** A king of Ayodhyā and son of Triśaṅku. He is mentioned in A.C. 48 as one who was at all costs true to his word. Viśvāmitra was sent by a jealous Indra to test his integrity. The sage took from him all he possessed and then demanded a gift, an obligation which the king could only discharge by selling himself and his wife. He then became the servant of a Dom at the burning-ghāṭs of Banaras (where his memory is still honoured). One day his wife, Śaivya, brought their dead son, Rohitāśva, to be burnt, but had no cloth to offer as the customary fee; so, rather than cheat his master, Hariścandra was about to tear off half her sārī when God appeared and brought the boy to life and took the king with his family and subjects to Vai-kunṭha.

**Hariyānā.** Viṣṇu's steed, Garuḍa, q.v.

**Hāṭakalocana.** Hiranyākṣa, q.v.

**Himācalā,** **Himāgiri,** **Himālaya,** **Himavān.** Himālaya, king of the snow-mountains, is regarded as a person, husband of Menā, or Menakā, and father of Pārvatī (B.C. 65) and Gaṅgā. He is called Tuhinācala.

**Himaśailasutā.** Pārvatī, q.v.

**Hiranyakāśipu.** A Daitya who obtained from Śiva the sovereignty of the three worlds for a million years. He persecuted his son, Prahlāda, for worshipping Viṣṇu and was slain by Viṣṇu as Narasimha (B.D. 27 : B.C. 122). See Viṣṇu.

In B.C. 79 he is said to have been ruined by Nārada's advice. When Kayādhu, his wife, was with child, Nārada came and gave her spiritual instruction; his words reached the ears of Prahlāda in the womb and caused him to become a votary of Viṣṇu; and this brought about his father's downfall.

**Hiranyākṣa.** A Daitya, the brother of Hiranyakāśipu. He dragged earth down to the lower regions and was slain by Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Vārāha (B.C. 122 : A.C. 297). See Viṣṇu. **Hulasi.** Supposed to be the mother of Tulasi Dās (B.C. 31).

Indirā. Laks̄mi, q.v.

Indra. The most important Vedic deity. The god of atmospheric phenomena, wielding the thunderbolt and conquering darkness; the ruler of the whole world, all-seeing and all-hearing and inspiring men with their best thoughts and impulses; the victorious god of battles, representing the Aryans in their triumph over the aborigines. He rides in a bright golden car drawn by two tawny horses. He delights in the intoxicating *soma* juice.

In later mythology Indra is still king of the gods, dwelling in Amarāvatī, but is inferior to Brahmā, Siva and Viṣṇu. He is the guardian of the eastern quarter and still hurls the thunderbolt and fights, not always successfully, with the demons. He is depicted as sensual, and lascivious, attempting, for example, to seduce Ahalyā (q.v.). He was defeated and carried off to Lankā by Meghanāda, Rāvana's son (q.v.). He frequently sends celestial nymphs to excite the passions of ascetics, the power of whose austerities he dreads. There are legends which tell of his quarrels with and humiliation by Kṛiṣṇa. His wife is Indrāṇī, or Sacī, and one of his sons Jayanta (q.v.). He rides on the elephant Airāvata.

Tulasi Dās treats him and the other Vedic deities with the utmost contempt, in contrast to his attitude to Viṣṇu and Siva.

Indra has many names. Those occurring in this poem are Sunāsira, Śakra (powerful), Maghavān (or Maghavā, wealthy and munificent), Pākaripu (enemy of a demon, Pāka, whom he slew), Purandara (destroyer of cities, i.e. of the demons and possibly of the clouds) and Sureśa (king of the gods).

Indrajit. Meghanāda, as conqueror of Indra (q.v.).

Iśa, Iśvara. Lord, God. Used for Viṣṇu, Kṛiṣṇa and others, and especially for Siva.

Jalacaraketu. Kāmadeva, q.v.

Jalandhara. A demon. The allusion in B.C. 123ff. is explained by the following story:—Jalandhara was born in the sea, and as soon as he was born began to cry so loudly that the gods were disturbed. Brahmā went and took the baby in his lap, and the baby pulled Brahmā's beard so violently that tears came into the god's eyes. When Jalandhara grew up, he fought with Indra for the possession of Amarāvatī, and Siva, who espoused Indra's cause, was quite unable to conquer him because his wife, Vṛindā, never ceased to worship Brahmā. So Viṣṇu took the form of Jalandhara and approached Vṛindā, who at once ceased to pray, with the result that Jalandhara fell down dead. Vṛindā, restrained from cursing Brahmā, burnt herself on her husband's pyre.

Jāmbavān. The old and wise king of the bears (hence called in the poem Riccheśa and Ricchapatī). He helped Rāma in his battle with Rāvana's demon host.

Janaka. The king of Videha and father of Sītā, who sprang up from the furrow when he was ploughing the ground in preparation

for a sacrifice. He was renowned for his great knowledge and sanctity. He is often called Videha, from the name of his kingdom.

**Janakasutā**, *Janakatanayā*, *Jānakī*. *Sitā*, q.v.

**Jatāyu**. A vulture, son of Aruṇa and brother of Sampati. He attempted to stop Rāvana carrying off Sitā in his chariot but after a brave struggle was wounded and left for dead. Rāma found him, and after learning the news of Sitā's rape, consoled him and sent him to his own realm (A.C. 27ff.).

**Javāli**. A friend of Daśaratha and a philosopher who attempted to persuade Rāma to return to his kingdom by putting forward sceptical and materialistic opinions; later, he repudiated his own arguments, saying that they had only been used for a purpose. Thus the *Rāmāyana*, but Tulasī Dās makes no mention of his speech, only including his name among those present at the meeting between Rāma and Bharata (A.C. 319).

**Jaya**. Jaya and his brother Vijaya were Viṣṇu's doorkeepers. One day they refused admittance to Sanaka and his brethren, whereupon Sanaka cursed them, compelling them to be born three times as demons (B.C. 122ff.).

**Jayanta**. The son of Indra. In A.C. 1ff. Tulasī Dās tells how he assumed the form of a crow and pecked Sitā's foot; and how he was pursued by a magic arrow from Rāma's bow until he returned to Rāma and asked pardon, escaping with the loss of one eye. The story is told by Vālmiki in what some believe to be a spurious passage of the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, but no mention is made of Jayanta.

**Jhaśaketu**, *Kāmadeva*, q.v.

**Kabandha**. A beautiful youth to whom was granted the boon of a long life. He challenged Indra to battle, and Indra drove his head and shoulders down into his body with a thunderbolt. A huge mouth was opened in his belly and his arms were made a league long so that he might catch creatures and devour them. Rāma met him in the forest and slew him. At his request Rāma burnt his body and he came out of the fire in his original beauty and ascended to heaven after counselling Rāma as to the conduct of the war against Rāvana. The story is given very fully by Vālmiki in his *Araṇyakāṇḍa* and the curse of a sage Sthūlaśiras is mentioned; Tulasī Dās attributes the curse to Durvāsā (A.C. 31ff.).

**Kadrū**. The sister of Surasā (q.v.). Both gave birth to countless snakes. Kadrū and Vinatā were wives of Kaśyapa, and the allusion in A.D. 19 is explained by the following story:—They were disputing one day about the colour of the horses of the sun, Vinatā insisting that they were white and Kadrū that they were black. They agreed that whichever of the two was wrong should be the servant of the other. At Kadrū's bidding one of her black snakes fastened itself on to the horses' tails and Vinatā, thus deceived, had to admit defeat.

Kaikeya, or Kekaya. A land, supposed to have been in the Panjab, of which Satyaketu was king (B.C. 153). Aśvapati, later king of the country, was the father of Kaikeyi, and it was to Kaikeya that Bharata went to visit his uncle Yudhajit.

Kaikeyi. Daughter of Aśvapati, king of Kaikeya, and one of Daśaratha's wives. She had saved Daśaratha's life in battle and had been promised two boons. By the advice of Mantharā, her humpbacked handmaid, she claimed the fulfilment of the king's promise and brought about Rāma's exile to the forest and secured the regency for her son Bharata. See the *Ayodhyā-kāṇḍa*.

Kailāsa. A mountain in the Himālaya range, to the north of the Mānasa lake. It was supposed to be the abode of Kuvera and the Paradise of Śiva. Rāvana constantly boasts of his prowess in lifting up Kailāsa (B.D. 179 : L.C. 25, 28).

Kaiṭabha. Kaiṭabha and Madhu were two demons who sprang from Viṣṇu's ear while he slept and were about to kill Brahmā, who was lying on the lotus springing from Viṣṇu's navel, when Viṣṇu awoke and slew them (L.C. 6).

Kakabhuśundi. See Bhuśundi.

Kalaketu. A demon who helped the pretended hermit in the story of Pratāpabhānu, q.v.

Kalanemi. The demon uncle of Rāvana. After trying to dissuade Rāvana from fighting against Rāma, he deceived Hanumān in the guise of a hermit; but his identity was disclosed by an Apsarā, slain by Hanumān when in the form of a crocodile. Hanumān thereupon killed the demon (B.C. 7 : B.C. 27 : L.C. 6ff.).

Kālikā. Pārvati (q.v.) in her terrible form. She slew the buffalo demon Mahisāsura, q.v.

Kāmadeva. The god of love, husband of Rati. His origin may be traced to the *Rigveda* (x. 129) where *kāma* is said to have arisen in the One as the bond connecting being with non-being. He is also given an exalted status in the *Atharvaveda*. Various accounts are given of his birth; in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* he is the son of Dharmā and Śraddhā; in the *Harivamśa*, the son of Lakṣmī. Accompanied by Rambhā, the Apsarās and Vasanta, and armed with a bow and five flower-tipped arrows, he works havoc in the hearts of men. In this form he is found unsuccessfully attempting to distract Nārada from his contemplation (B.C. 125ff.) and being consumed by the fire of Śiva's eye when he tried to shoot desire into that ascetic's heart (B.C. 83ff.). As thus rendered bodiless, he was called Anāṅga; but Śiva promised that he would be born again as Pradyumna, the son of Krisṇa and Rukmini.

Kāmadeva has many names; those used in this poem are: Māra (destroyer), Kandarpa (how haughty, or inflamer of the chief of gods), Madana (intoxicating with desire), Manmatha (mind-disturbing), Manobhava, Manoja, Manasija (mind-born), Jhasaketu, Vāricaraketu, Jalacaraketu (he on whose banner is

the fish), Asamaśara (he who carries an odd number of arrows), and Mayana.

Kamala. Lakṣmi, q.v.

Kamalapati. Viṣṇu, q.v.

Kāmāri, Kāmaripu. Śiva as foe of Kāmadeva, whom he consumed with the fire of his eye. See Śiva and Kāmadeva.

Kanakakaśipu. Hiranyakaśipu, q.v.

Kandarpa. Kāmadeva, q.v.

Kapila. The sage to whom the foundation of the Sāmkhya school is attributed. He is mentioned with high honour in B.C. 142 as ādideva, born of Devahūti, wife of Kardama. In the Rāmāyaṇa he is identified with Vāsudeva, or Viṣṇu, and is said to have destroyed the 60,000 sons of Sagara with a glance.

Kardama. A Prajāpati sprung from Brahmā. He married Devahūti, daughter of Svayambhuva Manu, and was the father of Kapila, q.v.

Karmanāśā. A tributary of the Ganges, flowing between Bihar and Banaras. Its touch was supposed to destroy all accumulated merit (B.C. 5 : A.C. 194). Various reasons are given for its impure associations, e.g. that it was formed from the spittle of Trīśāṅku, q.v.

Kṛtīkeya. Also called Skanda or Svāmikārttika. The son of Śiva, either by Pārvati or without female intervention, proceeding from the Ganges who received Śiva's seed from the fire. He was fostered by the Pleiades (Kṛittikā), hence his name. He had six heads to suck their six breasts. He is the god of war, and was born to destroy the demon Tāraka, q.v. He rides on a peacock, holding a bow and arrow. He is briefly mentioned in B.C. 103, and is called Śaḍānana, Śaḍvadana and Śaṇmukha (six-faced).

Kāśi. The modern Banaras, a very ancient and sacred city on the Ganges. Those who die there win liberation, because Śiva teaches them the power of the name of Rāma (B.C. 19, 46). Tulasi Dās spent the latter part of his life at Kāśi, where his house is still shown.

Kaśyapa. A Vedic seer to whom some hymns are attributed. In the Epics and Purāṇas he is the grandson of Brahmā and grandfather of Manu. He married Aditi and twelve other daughters of Dakṣa and begat the Ādityas. He is reckoned among the saptarishi, the stars of the Great Bear. In the Tretāyuga he and Aditi took birth as Daśaratha and Kausalyā, the parents of Rāma (B.C. 123).

Kausalyā. The wife of Daśaratha and mother of Rāma.

Kauśika. Viśvāmitra (q.v.), said in some accounts to have been the grandson of Kuśika.

Kesari. One of Rāma's monkey warriors (S.D. 54).

Ketu. See s.v. Rāhu.

Khara. A brother of Rāvana and Sūrpanakhā, slain by Rāma when he attempted to avenge his sister's mutilation (Ar.C. 17ff.).

Kharāri. Viṣṇu, q.v.

Khaśa. A northern tribe, probably to be identified with the Khāsiyas of Garhwāl and the districts to the north of it. They were regarded as degraded Kṣatriyas. Rāma showed mercy in saving one of this barbarous tribe (U.Ch. 14).

Kinnara. A divine being with the body of a man and the head of a horse. The name means 'What sort of a man?' The Kinnaras are celestial choristers and musicians, frequently associated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* with the Gandharvas, Apsarās and Yakṣas, and dwelling in the city of Kuvera on Mount Kailāsa. Some accounts state that they and the Yakṣas sprang from the toe of Brahmā, others that they were sons of Kaśyapa.

Kirāta. A savage tribe of foresters living in the mountains of the east, probably the Kirrhadae of Arrian. They were classed as Śūdras, or even Mlechhas. Vālmiki describes them as islanders who ate raw fish and lived amid the waters, of golden hue and pleasant appearance, wearing stiff tufts of hair; also as men-tigers, the meaning of which is not clear. They are mentioned in this poem as hunters and as serving Rāma in the forest.

Kola. An aboriginal tribe, inhabiting the forests of central India. They are mentioned as serving Rāma in the forest.

Kosala. The kingdom of Daśaratha, having for its capital Ayodhyā situated on the R. Sarayū.

Kriṣṇa. Śiva promises Rati that her husband, Kāmadeva, whom he has reduced to ashes, will be born again as Kriṣṇa's son, Pradyunna (B.C. 88). For Kriṣṇa as an incarnation, see Viṣṇu.

Kuliśarada. One of Rāvana's demon host (B.D. 180).

Kumbhaja. Agastya, q.v.

Kumbhakarna. The monstrous son of Viśravā and brother of Rāvana. More than one story is told in the *Bälakāṇḍa* to account for his birth as a demon. His appetite was so insatiable that Brahmā caused him to sleep for six months continuously and remain awake for one day only to satisfy his hunger. During the battle at Laṅkā he was awakened with great difficulty and went out to fight, but was slain by Rāma after a severe struggle.

Kumukha. One of Rāvana's demon warriors (B.D. 180).

Kuśa. Lava and Kuśa were the two sons of Rāma and Sītā. Their birth is mentioned in U.C. 23. In the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* they are born in Vālmiki's hermitage after Sītā had been banished from Ayodhyā owing to slanderous tongues impugning her purity. They are brought up by Vālmiki, who teaches them his *Rāmāyaṇa* and sends them out as rhapsodists to recite the epic far and wide. They reach Ayodhyā at a time when Rāma is about to perform an *asvamedha* and repeat the *Rāmāyaṇa* in his presence. Recognition takes place and Rāma recalls his wife.

Some editions of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* add an eighth section called the *Lavakuśakāṇḍa*, but this is certainly not by the hand of Tulasī Dās.

Kuśaketu, Kuśadhvaja. Janaka's younger brother, whose daughters Māndavi and Śrutakirti were given in marriage to Bharata and Śatruघna (B.C. 35).

Kuvera. Vaiśravana, or the son of Viśravā. In the Vedas he was a chief of evil spirits, but later he was exalted to the status of god of wealth, guardian of the nine treasures and regent of the northern quarter. He was a half-brother of Rāvana, who expelled him from Laṅkā and robbed him of the aerial chariot, Puspaka. Thereafter he lived on Mount Kailāsa with Yakṣas and Kinnaras as his attendants. He is represented as deformed, with one eye, three legs and only eight teeth. He receives no worship.

Lakṣmaṇa. The son of Daśaratha and Sumitrā, hence often called Saumitri. He was Rāma's favourite brother and accompanied him and Sītā to exile in the forest. He married Sītā's sister, Urmilā. He shared all Rāma's adventures and is represented as very loyal, impulsive and somewhat quarrelsome. The *Uttarakānda* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* describes his end; he broke in on an interview between Rāma and Kāla, and then, knowing his fate, retired to the R. Sarayū and was conveyed to heaven.

He represented one eighth part of the divinity of Viśnu (B.C. 189), but Tulasi Dās also follows the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* in frequently speaking of him as an incarnation of Śesanāga or Ananta (e.g. B.C. 17).

Lakṣmi. The goddess of fortune and wealth, wife of Viśnu, sometimes regarded as the mother of Kāmadeva. Various accounts are given of her origin, but the most common, received by Tulasi Dās, is that she sprang from the ocean when it was churned (B.D. 247. See Viśnu). Whenever Viśnu became incarnate as man, she became incarnate as his wife; thus Sītā is often called Śrī or Lakṣmi, and references are made to their former union (e.g. B.C. 226). Lakṣmi is specially worshipped during the festivals of Divālī and Dhanaterasa. She is also called Indirā, Ramā and Śrī.

Laṅkā. Modern Ceylon or its capital city. The city was built of gold, surrounded by walls and moats and containing magnificent buildings, the architect being Viśvakarmā. He built it for Kuvera, from whom it was taken by Rāvana. After Rāvana's death Vibhīṣana was crowned king of Laṅkā.

Laṅkini. A female demon who was overthrown by Hanumān as he entered Laṅkā (S.C. 4).

Lava. See Kuśa.

Lomaśa. A seer with whom Kākabhuśundi conversed on the summit of Mount Meru. Bhūṣundi refused to accept the doctrine of the impersonal Absolute as taught by Lomaśa, who consequently turned him into a crow (U.D. 110ff.).

Madana. Kāmadeva, q.v.

Madanārī. Śiva, q.v.

Madhava. Viśnu, q.v. He is worshipped under that name at Prāyāga (B.C. 44; A.C. 105).

**Madhu.** A demon slain by Viṣṇu (L.C. 6); see Kaiṭabha. Hence Viṣṇu is called Madhusūdana.

**Madhuvana.** The honey grove, raided by the monkeys as they returned to Rāma with news of Sītā (S.C. 28). The grove, according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, was guarded by Dadhimukha, who was trampled under foot when he protested.

**Magadha.** S. Bihar, mentioned as impure compared with Kāśī (B.C. 6) and Gayā (A.C. 43).

**Maghavān,** Maghavā. Indra, q.v.

**Mahādeva,** Maheśa. Śiva, q.v.

**Mahiṣeśa.** Lord of the buffalo. (a) Yama (q.v.), who rides on a buffalo (B.C. 4); (b) Mahiṣasura, a demon in the form of a buffalo, slain by Kāli (B.C. 47).

**Mahodara.** One of Rāvaṇa's demon warriors (L.C. 62).

**Mainā.** Wife of Himālaya. See Menā.

**Maināka.** A mountain, son of Himālaya and Menakā, said in the *Mahābhārata* to be north of Kailāsa. In the Kritayuga all mountains had wings, but Indra shot them off. Maināka, however, escaped with the help of the Wind and hid in the depths of the ocean, where he guards demons in prison. When Hanumān leapt over the sea, Maināka arose to offer him a resting-place, but Hanumān only touched him and hurried on (S.C. 1. See also the *Sundarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*). Rāvaṇa mistakes Jaṭāyu for winged Maināka (Ar.C. 27).

**Mālava.** Mālwā, a country in central India, contrasted for its fertility with barren Mārwār (B.C. 6).

**Malaya.** A mountain range in Malabar, abounding in the finest sandal trees (B.D. 10a).

**Mālyavān.** Rāvaṇa's maternal grandfather and wise counsellor, twice mentioned as vainly remonstrating with the Demon King (S.C. 40 : L.C. 48).

**Mānasa.** A very sacred lake in the Himālayas, said to have been created by the will of Brahmā. The lake and the swans that glide upon it are frequently mentioned in an allegorical sense.

**Manasija.** Kāmadeva, q.v.

**Mandākinī.** A tributary of the Payasvini, flowing by Citrakūta and brought there by the austerities of Anasūyā, wife of Atri (B.C. 132).

**Mandara.** The mountain supported by Viṣṇu in his avatāra as Kūrma. See Viṣṇu.

**Māndavi.** Daughter of Kuśadhvaja and cousin of Sītā. She married Bharata (B.Ch. 35).

**Mandodari.** Daughter of the demon Maya, and Rāvaṇa's favourite wife (B.C. 178), who vainly attempts to dissuade him from his evil courses.

**Manmatha,** Manobhava, Manoja. Kāmadeva, q.v.

**Manojanasāvana,** Manośāri. Śiva, q.v.

**Mantharā.** The humpbacked handmaid of queen Kaikeyī, whose jealous misrepresentations induced the queen to compel Daśaratha to exile Rāma and make Bharata regent (A.D. 12ff.).

**Manu.** A name given to fourteen progenitors of mankind and rulers of the earth, each of whom reigns for a *manvantara*, or period of 4,320,000 years. The first of the Manus was Svayambhuva (B.C. 142), husband of Śatarūpā. To this Manu is ascribed the *Mānava-dharma-sāstra*, or Code of Law (A.C. 28), most probably compiled about 400–300 B.C.

**Māra.** Kāmadeva, q.v.

**Mārīca.** A demon, son of Tārakā and Sunda, whom Rāma drove away from Viśvāmitra's sacrifice (B.C. 208). Later, he assumed the form of a golden deer to lure Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa away from Sītā so that Rāvaṇa might carry her off (Ar.C. 25).

**Maru.** Mārwār, a district contrasted for its barrenness with fertile Mālwā (B.C. 6). The word is used for any arid, sandy desert.

**Mārutasuta.** Hanumān, q.v.

**Mātali.** Indra's charioteer, sent with a chariot to help Rāma in his battle with the demons (L.C. 89).

**Maya.** A Daitya, architect and artificer of the demons, father of Mandodari, Rāvaṇa's wife (B.C. 178) and of the demon Māyāvi, who attacked Bāli (K.C. 6).

**Mayana.** Kāmadeva, q.v.

**Mayanā.** Wife of Himālaya. See Menā.

**Mayanda.** One of Rāma's monkey warriors. He was son of one of the Aśvins (S.D. 54).

**Mayatanayā.** Daughter of Maya, Mandodari, q.v.

**Māyāvi.** The demon who attacked and was slain by Bāli (K.C. 6). He was the son of Maya, or, according to Vālmiki, of Dundubhi.

**Meghanāda.** The eldest son of Rāvaṇa and Mandodari. When Rāvaṇa attacked Indra, Meghanāda, becoming invisible, bound Indra and carried him off to Lankā. At Brahmā's request he released him and obtained the title of Indrajit. He shot Hanumān with a shaft given him by Brahmā, and Hanumān allowed himself to be bound for the honour of the god (S.C. 19ff.). After fighting valiantly with a number of magic contrivances in the battle of Lankā, he was finally slain by Lakṣmaṇa. He is also called in this poem Vāridanāda, Ghananāda and Śakrāri (foe of Indra).

**Mekala.** A mountain in which the R. Narmadā is said to rise (B.C. 31).

**Mekalasutā.** Daughter of Mount Mekala, the R. Narmadā.

**Menā.** Menakā. The wife of Himālaya and mother of Pārvati, Gangā and Maināka.

**Mēru,** or Sumeru. A fabulous mountain of gold, 84,000 *yojanas* high, situated in the centre of Jaṁbudvipa, the central island or continent of the world. Its shape is variously described as square, conical, spherical or spiral. Its eastern face is white,

its southern face yellow, its western face black and its northern face red, and these faces are occupied by the regents of the corresponding points of the compass. The Ganges falls from heaven on to its summit and flows thence to the surrounding worlds in four streams. On its peak is the city of Brahmā, containing gardens planted with every kind of fruit-bearing tree, and here the gods and other celestial beings meet in council.

**Mithilā.** The capital of Videha, the kingdom of Janaka, between the R. Gandaki and the R. Kośi. The modern Tirhut.

**Mukunda.** Visnu, q.v.

**Nahuṣa.** Grandson of Pururavā, son of Ambarisa and father of Yayāti; a great king of Pratiṣṭhānapura. The allusions in A.D. 61 and A.D. 228 are explained by the following story:—When Indra had slain Vṛitra, he abdicated and fled to the Mānasa lake to hide himself for a thousand years because he had killed a Brāhmaṇa. Vṛihaspati then summoned Nahuṣa to fill the vacant throne, a position which made the king so arrogant that he sent for Indrāṇi to be his concubine. She consulted with Vṛihaspati and replied that she would only consent if Nahuṣa came to her in a palanquin carried by Brāhmans. Nahuṣa managed to persuade the Seven Seers to perform this menial task, but when they did not carry him as quickly as he wished, he kicked Agastya and shouted, 'Surpa! Surpa!', that is, 'Hurry up!' Therefore the seers dropped him in a rage, and Agastya cursed him, transforming him into a serpent (*sarpa*). The *Mahābhārata* relates how the serpent one day caught Bhīma and was delivered from the curse by Yudhiṣṭhīra.

**Naimiṣa.** A very sacred wood near the Gomati in the district of Sītāpur. Various accounts are given of the origin of its sanctity and name; the *Vārāha Purāṇa* tells of a sage called Gauramukha who destroyed a large army of demons in the twinkling of an eye (*nimiṣa*). It was in this forest that the sage Santi recited the *Mahābhārata* to the assembled seers; and it was to the Naimiṣaranya that Svayambhuva Manu retired with his wife Śatarūpā to practise austerities (B.C. 143).

**Nala.** One of Rāma's monkey warriors, said in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to be the son of Viśvakarmā. He and Nila went south with Hanumān in the quest for Sītā (K.D. 22ff.) and built the bridge to Laṅkā, having the power to make stones float (S.C. 60 : L.C. 1ff.). One legend relates that when certain saints were worshipping a Salagrāma on the seashore with closed eyes, Nala and Nila threw it into the sea. The saints then cursed them, saying that no stone they touched would sink.

**Nandigrāma.** A village eight miles from Ayodhyā, to which Bharata retired to live an ascetic life during the period of Rāma's exile (A.C. 324).

**Nara-Nārāyaṇa.** Nara, the original man, is inseparably associated with Nārāyaṇa, and in *Manu* i. 10 the two are apparently identified. 'The old Vedic conception of two birds dwelling in a

tree, friends and associates of each other, might have given rise to the stories of the eternal friendship of Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the individual soul and God. The onlooker is Nārāyaṇa and the eater of the fruit is Nara . . . . Nārāyaṇa is the origin of the whole world, the Supreme God represented as lying on the body of a huge serpent in the ocean of milk. Metaphor apart, he is the self-conscious Lord of the universe confronted by the principle of not-self. It is from him that Nārada is supposed to get his monotheistic religion.' (Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, i. 492, n. 2).

In epic poetry they are sons of Dharma and Mūrti or Ahimṣā and are regarded as incarnations of Viṣṇu, Arjuna being identified with Nara and Kṛiṣṇa with Nārāyaṇa. Many stories are told of them in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas. Hanumān mistakes Rāma and Lakṣmana for Nara and Nārāyaṇa when he meets them on the borders of Sugrīva's retreat (K.C. 1).

Nārada. A ṛishi, commonly called *derarsi*, to whom some of the hymns of the *Rigveda* are ascribed. The *Harivamśa* calls him a mind-born son of Brahmā, but the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* makes him the son of Kaśyapa and one of Dakṣa's daughters. His title of Kapivakra, or Monkey-face, implies that he was not beautiful, while that of Kalikāraka, or Strife-maker, was due to his habit of mischievous tale-bearing. He invented the *vīṇā*, or lute, and was never tired of singing Hari's praises to its accompaniment. In this poem we find him constantly appearing at critical moments.

The allusion in B.C. 3 is explained by the following story:—Nārada told Vedavyāsa that in a former life he had been the son of a slave-girl, to the house of whose mistress saints and sages frequently resorted. He used to eat the food they had left and thus acquired such merit that he was born again as a son of Brahmā.

Tulasi Dās tells the story of the humbling of Nārada's pride as one explanation of the birth of Rāvaṇa and Kuṇḍhakarṇa (B.C. 125ff.). For the story of Nārada's interference with Dakṣa's plans and Dakṣa's curse see s.v. Dakṣa; and for his dealings with Citraketu and Hiranyakaśipu see under those names.

Narahari, Narakesari. Narasimha. See Viṣṇu.

Nārāyaṇa. See Nara-Nārāyaṇa.

Narmadā. A sacred river, regarded in this poem as the daughter of Mount Mekala.

Nila. One of Rāma's monkey warriors, said in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to be the son of Agni. He, with Nala (q.v.), joined Hanumān's expedition to the south in quest of Sītā (K.D. 22ff.) and built the bridge of floating stones and mountains to Laṅkā (S.C. 60; L.C. 1ff.).

Nimi. The son of Iksvāku and the founder of the dynasty of Mithilā, to which Janaka belonged (A.D. 277). He asked Vasiṣṭha to perform a sacrifice for him, but when Vasiṣṭha asked

for a postponement, he had it performed by Gotama. Vasiṣṭha consequently cursed him, compelling him to lose his bodily form, and Nimi retorted the curse upon the sage. Vasiṣṭha was born again as the issue of Mitra-Varuna, but when the gods wished Nimi to regain his bodily form, he declined. Nimi was therefore lodged in the eyes of all living creatures, in consequence of which their eyelids are always opening and shutting. Nimi and his descendants, and their kingdom, were therefore called Videha (bodiless) (B.C. 227).

Niṣāda. A tribe inhabiting the Vindhya mountains. Their king, Guha, became the friend and companion of Rāma (A.C. 88ff). The following account is given of their origin:—A certain king Veṇa became very arrogant and forbade his subjects to offer any sacrifices except to himself. After vain remonstrances the sages slew him with blades of consecrated grass. Thereafter the kingdom became a prey to bandits; so the sages rubbed Veṇa's thigh and produced a being with the complexion of a charred stake and flat features and of dwarfish stature. When he asked what he was to do, the sages said, 'Sit down (*niṣida*)'.

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* describes the Niṣādas as dwarfish, with a complexion as black as a crow, projecting chin, broad flat nose, red eyes and tawny hair. The *Padma Purāṇa* adds a wide mouth, large ears and protuberant belly. Manu describes them as the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Śūdra mother. They hunt and fish and indulge in dacoity.

Niṣatha. One of Rāma's monkey warriors (S.D. 54).

Pākaripu. Indra, q.v.

Pampā. The name of a river which rises in Mount Risyamūka, and of a lake near by. The lake, which Rāma visited, is fully described in Ar.C. 37ff.

Paficavatī. A place in the Dāndaka forest by the river Godāvari where Rāma spent a period of his exile and where the mutilation of Sūrpanakhā took place (Ar.C. 12ff.).

Paraśudhara, Paraśurāma. Rāma with the axe, an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The meeting between Rāma and Paraśurāma (B.C. 265ff.), when the latter challenges Rāma and finally acknowledges his lordship, is placed in this poem directly after the breaking of the bow, but occurs in the *Rāmāyaṇa* while Rāma is on his way home. The allusions in B.C. 273 and A.C. 174 to Paraśurāma's payment of debts to his father, Jamadagni, and his mother, Reṇukā, are explained thus:—Jamadagni was incensed with Reṇukā because she had entertained impure thoughts, so he called on each of his sons in succession to kill her. Paraśurāma alone obeyed, but when his father told him to ask for a boon, he begged that his mother might be restored to life in a pure state and that he himself might be long-lived and invincible. For the vengeance he took on the sons of Kārtavīrya for the slaughter of his father and for his incarnation in general see Viṣṇu.

Pārvati. Wife, or *sakti* of Śiva; in this form, daughter of Himālaya and Menā; hence called in this poem Girijā, Girinandini, Hima-sailasutā. She has both a mild and terrible aspect; as mild, she is called Umā (light, or splendour; traditionally derived from *u-mā*, i.e. 'Oh do not [practise austerities]', said by her mother when Pārvati was doing so in order to win Śiva); Gaurī (fair-complexioned); Bhavāni (wife of Bhava, or Śiva); Śivā (propitious); Ambikā (the mother); as daughter of Dakṣa and wife of Śiva before her self-immolation at Dakṣa's sacrifice, Sati; in her terrible aspect, Kālikā, or Kālī (the black goddess) and Durgā (the inaccessible), in which form she slew the buffalo demon Mahisāsura (B.C. 47).

Pārvati has many other names; the above are those that occur in this poem, where she appears as the listener to Śiva's recital of the story of Rāma. The following story explains the allusion in B.C. 19:—One day Śiva, having finished his meal, summoned Pārvati to take her food. She replied that she had not yet repeated the thousand names of Viṣṇu, whereupon Śiva told her that a single repetition of the name of Rāma would have an equal virtue. She believed him and followed his advice, and Śiva was so pleased with her faith that he assumed the Ardhanārī, or Ardhanārī, half-male, half-female form.

Pāvaka. Agni, q.v.

Pavanakumāra, Pavanasuta, Pavanatanaya. Hanumān, q.v.

Payasvini. The R. Payoṣṇi, a tributary of the Jumna, flowing at the base of the hill of Citrakūṭa (A.C. 133).

Piṅgalā. A harlot (not referred to by name) who owed her salvation to Rāma. One day she saw a rich and handsome young man approaching and awaited his advances, but in vain; he did not come. While she waited, it occurred to her that it was foolish to desire a man when she might enjoy the love of Rāma, and that sensual desire was the root of all evil. She therefore abandoned her evil ways and became a devotee (B.C. 26 : U.Ch. 14).

Prabhajjanajāya. Hanumān, q.v.

Prahasta. One of Rāvana's captains, in this poem his son, who endeavoured to turn Rāvana from his purpose (L.D. 8ff.). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* he plays an important part and encourages Rāvana to fight.

Prahālaḍa. Son of Hiranyakaśipu and votary of Viṣṇu. For his story see Viṣṇu.

Prajāpati, Prajeśa. Lord of creatures. In the Veda the term is applied to various deities, e.g. Indra, Savitā, Soma, Hiranyagarbha, and in *Manu* to Brahmā, denoting their function as progenitors. He occurs in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (iv. 7.) as a personal god, who, tired of solitude, draws forth from himself all that exists, or produces the world after having divided himself into two, one half male and the other half female; and in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as a teacher instructing Indra; in the *Mahābhārata* he is important before the rise to supremacy of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

There are also ten sages, mind-born sons of Brahmā, to whom the title is given as fathers of the human race, viz. Marici, Atri, Angirā, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Pracetā or Dakṣa, Bhṛigu and Nārada. Dakṣa is Prajāpati at the time of his famous sacrifice (B.C. 60).

Prajeśakumāri. Daughter of Dakṣa the Prajāpati, Sati. See Pārvatī.

Pratāpabhānu. Son of Satyaketu, king of Kaikeya. His story is told (B.C. 153ff.) to account for his rebirth as Rāvana.

Pravarṣana. A mountain in Kiṣkindhā, where Rāma stayed during the rains (K.C. 12).

Prayāga. A famous place of pilgrimage at the junction of the Ganges, the Jumna and the fabled Sarasvatī. Water from this confluence was used at the coronation of ancient kings. Here was the hermitage of Bharadvāja, visited by Rāma (A.C. 106ff.) and Bharata (A.C. 206ff.), and here he listened to the story of Rāma as recited by Yajñavalkya (B.C. 30). Every year in the month of Māgha a great gathering of devotees takes place at Prayāga. Here, too, grows the *akṣaya-bata*, or eternal fig-tree (A.C. 105). Prayāga is glorified in B.C. 2, B.D. 2, and A.C. 105ff.

Pṛithurāja. The allusion in B.C. 4 is explained by the legend that Pṛithurāja asked Viṣṇu as a boon that his ears should have the power of ten thousand ears with which to hear his praises.

Priyavrata. The younger son of Svayambhuva Manu and Śatarūpā (B.C. 142). The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* tells how he turned night into day by following the sun seven times round the earth in his flaming car. He was stopped by Brahmā, and the ruts made by the wheels of his chariots became the seven oceans.

Pulastya. One of the Prajāpatis and *saptarishi*. He was the father of Viśravā and grandfather of Rāvana, Kumhbhakarṇa and Kuvera (B.D. 176 : S.C. 23).

Purandara. Indra, q.v.

Purāri. Foe of the demon Vāpa, also called Tripurāri. Śiva, q.v.

Puṣpaka. A will-guided, self-moving aerial car, presented to Kuvera by Brahmā. Rāvana robbed him of it. After the conquest of Laṅkā Rāma and his followers flew back on it to Ayodhyā; after which it was returned to Kuvera (B.C. 179 : L.C. 115ff. : U.D. 4).

Raghu. According to the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa, the son of Dilipa and great-grandfather of Rāma. Other authorities give a different account of his genealogy, but all agree that he was an ancestor of Rāma.

Raghu-canda, -nanda, -nandana, -nātha, -nāyaka, -pati, -rāi, -rāja, -rāū, -vara, -vira. Lord, hero, king, etc., of the house of Raghu, i.e. Rāma.

Rāhu. A Daitya, the son of Vipracitti and Simhikā. He had four arms and a tail. When the gods had produced *amṛita* by churning the ocean, he assumed a disguise and drank some of it; the sun and the moon detected the fraud and told Viṣṇu, who cut off his head and two of his arms with his discus; but as he had secured

immortality, his body was placed in the heavens, the upper part, a dragon's head, being the ascending node, and the lower part, a dragon's tail, the descending node. Rāhu takes vengeance on the sun and the moon by occasionally swallowing them, but they emerge through his severed neck, helped by the prayers and uproar of the faithful. Thus Rāhu is the cause of eclipses, and is called Vidhūntuda, tormentor of the moon.

He is also regarded as one of the planets, lord of the S.W. quarter and king of meteors. Ketu is a comet or meteor. Rāhu and Ketu are frequently mentioned in the poem as mischievous, and also as symbolical of Rāma's attitude to Rāvana as the moon (B.C. 4 : B.C. 7 : and *passim*).

Ramā. Lakṣmī, q.v.

Rāma. The hero of the poem.

Ramāniketa, Ramāpati. Viṣṇu, q.v.

Rambhā. A beautiful nymph, produced by the churning of the ocean. She is associated with Kāmadeva in his attempts to seduce anchorites from their austerities (B.C. 126). The *Bālakānda* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* tells how she failed to allure Viśvāmitra and was condemned by his curse to remain petrified for a thousand years.

Rāmeśvara. A famous place of pilgrimage. It is related that at the time of the building of the bridge Rāma set up a *linga*, or emblem of Śiva, on the sea-shore and had it consecrated by great sages, speaking of Śiva with the greatest reverence and affection (L.C. 2ff.).

Rantideva. A pious king of the lunar race. On one occasion he had fasted for forty-eight days and was about to break his fast when a Brāhmaṇa, a Śūdra and a dog arrived. Rather than send them empty away he gave them all he had except a little water. This he was just about to drink when a thirsty Cāndāl arrived and asked for water. The king gave it him and went thirsty himself. These importunate guests were Brahmā and other gods in disguise; they blessed him for his generosity and rewarded him with liberation (A.C. 95).

Rati. The wife of Kāmadeva, formed from the sweat of Dakṣa's body, a pattern of beauty. When Kāmadeva was consumed by Śiva's third eye, Rati begged the god to relent and obtained a promise that her husband would be born again as Kṛiṣṇa's son (B.Ch. 6ff.).

Rāvana. The Demon King of Laṅkā, son of Viśravā and grandson of Pulastya; the villain of the poem, finally slain and granted liberation by Rāma. Some causes of his birth, his evil deeds and wars with the gods are related in the *Bālakānda*. For his alliance with the Monkey King of Kiskindhā see s.v. Bāli. He constantly boasts of his prowess in lifting up Kailāsa (B.D. 179 : L.C. 23, 28), and of the sacrifice of his heads (L.C. 25 : L.D. 28; mentioned in the *Uttarakānda* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which relates many of his early deeds). He is called by many names meaning ten-headed, ten-necked, or ten-faced—Daśaśīsa, Daśamukha,

Daśakandhara, Daśānana, Daśagrīva, Daśakanṭha, Daśamauli; as possessing twenty arms, he is called Bahubāhu and Bhujabiha; and as king of Laṅkā, Laṅkeśa.

Ravinandini, Ravitanujā. The river Yamunā (q.v.), as daughter of the sun.

Ripudavana, Ripuhana, Ripusūdana. Śatrughna, q.v.

Risyamūka. A mountain where Rāma met Sugrīva (K.C. 1ff.).

Rudra. Śiva, q.v.

Śaci. Wife of Indra and mother of Jayanta.

Sadānana. Six-faced Kārttikeya, q.v.

Sahasānana. Thousand-faced Śeṣanāga, q.v.

Sahasrabāhu. Kārtavīrya, a great king, to whom the sage Dattatreya granted many boons, among others that he should have a thousand arms. For the vengeance taken on his sons by Paraśurāma for the slaughter of his father, Jamadagni, see Viṣṇu (B.C. 4 : A.C. 229).

Sal. A tributary of the R. Gomati, where Bharata halted on his way to Citrakūta (A.C. 189).

Śakra. Indra, q.v.

Śakrāri. Meghanāda, q.v.

Śamana. Yama, q.v.

Śambhu. Śiva, q.v.

Samirakumāra. Hanumān, q.v.

Śamkara. Śiva, q.v.

Sampāti. A vulture, variously said to be the son of Garuḍa or of Aruṇa and Śyeni. For the story of his flight to the sun with his brother Jaṭayu and the help he gave to the monkeys in their search for Sītā see K.C. 27ff.

Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra. Four mind-born sons of Brahmā, who declined to create progeny and remained for ever in the form of pure and innocent boys, renowned for their wisdom and devotion. For their interview with Rāma see U.C. 30ff.

Sanmukha. Six-faced Kārttikeya, q.v.

Sarabhaṅga. A hermit visited by Rāma. He was about to die, but had put off his death when he heard that Rāma was coming. After conversation with Rāma he ascended the pyre and was carried to heaven (A.C. 6ff.). Vālmiki tells the story at considerable length, relating how Rāma, as he approached the hermitage, saw Sarabhaṅga talking with Indra, who had come to fetch him in his chariot.

Śāradā. Sarasvatī, q.v.

Sarāsura. Vāṇasura. See Vāṇa.

Sarasvatī. In the Vedas primarily a river, but also celebrated as a goddess, lauded for the fertilizing and purifying power of her waters and the bestower of wealth. In the Brāhmaṇas she is recognized as the goddess of speech, and in the epic period as the wife of Brahmā, goddess of speech and learning, inventor of Sanskrit and the Devanāgarī script and patroness of arts and

sciences. In this poem she is frequently mentioned, with Śesanāga, as being unable to describe indescribable scenes; as inspiring the poet (B.C. 11); and as still further perverting the mind of the already perverse Mantharā (A.D. 12).

Other names for Sarasvatī used in this poem are Vāṇī, Girā, Śāradā, Bhāratī, Brahmāṇī and Vidhātrī.

The river rises in the Himālayas and is lost in the sands of the desert, but it is popularly supposed to follow an underground course and to join the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna at Trivenī (B.C. 2).

**Sarayū.** The river Sarju, on which stood the ancient city of Ayodhyā. It is said in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, not quite accurately, to rise in the Mānasa-sarovara.

Śārṅgapāṇi. Viṣṇu, q.v.

**Śatānanda.** Janaka's family priest, who summoned Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to the king's presence (B.C. 236).

**Śatarūpā.** The wife of Svayambhuva Manu, who went with him to perform austerities in the Naimiṣa forest and was born again as Kausalyā (B.C. 142ff.).

**Satha.** One of Rāma's monkey warriors (S.D. 54).

**Śadvadana.** Six-faced Kārttikeya, q.v.

**Sati.** Pārvatī, q.v.

**Śatrughna.** Brother of Lakṣmaṇa, son of Sumitrā. In him one eighth part of Viṣṇu's divinity was incarnate. He is associated with Bharata as Lakṣmaṇa with Rāma. He married Śrutakīrti, Sītā's cousin. By variations on his name, which means Destroyer of foes, he is also called in this poem Śatruhana, Śatrusūdana, Ripuhana, Ripusūdana, Ripudavana.

Śatruhana, Śatrusūdana. Śatrughna, q.v.

**Satyaketu.** King of Kaikeya and father of Pratāpabhanu (B.C. 153).

**Saumitri.** Son of Sumitrā, Lakṣmaṇa, q.v.

**Śavarī.** A woman of a savage Śavara tribe. An aged votaress whom Rāma visited in his search for Sītā (Ar.C. 32ff.). When her *guru* died, she asked him to take her to heaven, but he bade her wait to see Rāma. She advised him to go to Lake Pampā and seek alliance with Sugrīva. Vālmiki places her hermitage by the lake, and attributes the advice to Kabandha.

**Śesanāga.** King of the Nāgas, or Serpents, dwelling in Pātāla. He has a thousand heads and forms the couch of Viṣṇu when he rests upon the Ocean of Milk. He is represented as supporting the world (B.C. 20) and was used as a rope at the churning of ocean (see Viṣṇu). He was the son of Kaśyapa and Kadru.

As having a thousand tongues (B.C. 4) he is called Sahasānana (thousand-faced), and is coupled with Sarasvatī as eloquent and unable to describe the indescribable. As king of the serpents he is called Ahiṇāja. Lakṣmaṇa is regarded as an incarnation of Śesanāga (B.C. 17), and is sometimes called Ananta, a title of the Serpent King.

Śīlanidhi. The king of the magic city created by Viṣṇu to deceive Nārada (B.C. 130).

Sinhala. Lankā, q.v.

Sitā. In the Veda Sitā is the Furrow, worshipped as a deity presiding over agriculture and fruits; in the epic period, the daughter of Janaka and wife of Rāma. Vālmiki tells the story of her birth; Janaka was ploughing a field in preparation for a sacrifice when there sprang from the furrow a girl whom he adopted and brought up as his own daughter. Hence her name Avanikumāri (A.C. 64).

Sitā is regarded as the incarnation of Viṣṇu's wife and is sometimes called Śrī or Lakṣmī. As daughter of Janaka, king of Videha, she is called Jānaki, Janakasutā, Janakatanayā, Videhakumāri and Vaidehi.

Śiva. One of the *trimūrti*, the Destroyer. Śiva does not occur as a proper name in the Veda, but his personality is one with Rudra, a Vedic deity, the lord of songs and sacrifices, bountiful, healing disease and removing sin. In the *Atharvaveda* he is dark, black, destroying, terrible. These two aspects persist into epic times. As the auspicious and reproductive power, he is worshipped in the form of the *linga*, or phallus; as the destroyer, he appears in the form of a naked ascetic, accompanied by a hideous troop of ghosts and goblins (B.C. 93ff.), engirdled with serpents and necklaces of skulls, with matted hair and ash-smearred body. He is white, with a dark-blue throat, and rides on a white bull; the number of his arms varies from two to ten, and he has three eyes. He has the mark of a crescent moon on his forehead and carries a trident. He dwells on Mount Kailāsa.

Intense rivalry existed between the followers of Viṣṇu and Śiva, but in this poem Śiva, though inferior to Viṣṇu and represented as his worshipper, is honoured and revered by Rāma (L.C. 2ff. and see Introd., pp. xxv–xxvii). He appears as one who told the story of Rāma to his wife, Pārvatī, and is mentioned as bringing salvation to men at Kāśī by teaching them the virtue of Rāma's name (B.C. 19 : B.C. 46).

In B.C. 82ff. he burns Kāmadeva to ashes with the fire of his third eye. His throat is blue because he swallowed the poison recovered at the churning of ocean (see Viṣṇu), and by repeating the name of Rāma converted its effect into that of ambrosia (B.C. 19). The reference in B.D. 25 is explained by the following story:—Of the thousand million verses of the *Rāmāyaṇa* Śiva distributed 330,000,000 to each of the three worlds; he then divided the remaining ten million into three sets of 3,300,000 each; the odd hundred thousand into three sets of 33,000 each; the odd thousand into three sets of 300 each; the odd hundred into three sets of 33 each, leaving one verse of 32 letters. This he divided into three sets of ten letters each, leaving two letters, which he kept for himself. These were the two letters of the name of Rāma, the gist of the whole poem.

Siva has a thousand names, of which the following occur in this poem: Hara (seizer), Purāri, or Tripurāri (foe of the demon Vāna, or Tripura, so called because he received in gift three cities from Śiva, Brahmā and Viṣṇu), Bhava (existence), Īśa, Maheśa, Mahādeva (great god), Giriśa, Girinātha (lord of the mountains), Gauriśa (lord of Gauri, or Pārvati), Vṛisaketu (he on whose banner is blazoned the bull), Viśvanātha (lord of the universe), Śāmkara, Sainbhu (auspicious), Rudra (roaring), Kāmaripu, Kāmāri, Madanāri, Manojāri, Manojañāvana (foe and destroyer of Kāmadeva).

Śivā, Pārvatī, q.v.

Śivi. A king renowned for his compassion (A.C. 30). He had offered ninety-two great sacrifices, and was hoping to complete the hundred, when Indra in a fit of jealousy determined to prevent him. He therefore assumed the form of a hawk, and transforming Agni into a dove, pursued it till it took refuge in Śivi's bosom. Śivi promised to protect it. The hawk protested that the dove was his lawful prey, and Śivi, rather than break his promise and surrender the dove, agreed to give the hawk an equal weight of his own flesh; but the more flesh he hacked from his own body, the heavier grew the dove, till at last, when only his bones were left, he threw his fleshless body into the scales.

Sona. A tributary of the Ganges, joining it ten miles north of Dānāpur in Bihar.

Sri. Lakṣmi, q.v.

Śringavera. A town on the left bank of the Ganges, on the frontier between Kosala and the Bhil country. It was the capital city of Guha, king of the Niśādas, visited by Rāma soon after setting out for the forest (A.C. 87).

Śringi. A seer summoned by Vasiṣṭha to perform the sacrifice that resulted in the birth of Daśaratha's four sons (B.C. 188). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is called Risyasṛinga and his story is told at great length.

Śrinivāsa, Śripati, Śriraṅga. Viṣṇu, q.v.

Śrutakirti. Sitā's cousin, who married Satruघna (B.C.Ch. 35).

Subāhu. A demon, who with Mārīca disturbed Viśvāmitra's sacrifice. Rāma slew him with an arrow of fire (B.C. 204ff.).

Sugriva. The brother of Bāli, for whom Rāma regained the kingdom of Kiśkindhā; then as king of the monkeys he helped Rāma in his search for Sitā. His sin, mentioned in B.C. 29, and not otherwise in this poem, was the taking to wife of Tārā, Bāli's widow, compared with Bāli's action in taking Rumā, Sugriva's wife, as related in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Suka. (a) Śukadeva, son of Vyāsa, noted for his eloquence and learning. It is said that the instruction he gave to Parikṣit forms the substance of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. (b) A spy of Rāvana, who brought the Demon King a letter from Lakṣmana and tried in vain to dissuade him from his evil courses (S.C. 53 : S.O. 57).

Sukantha. Sugriva, q.v.

Sūkarakheta. The modern Soron in the district of Mathurā, where Tulasi Dās heard the story of Rāma from his *guru* (B.D. 30a). It is now a much frequented place of pilgrimage.

Suketusutā. Tārakā, q.v.

Sukra. The son of Bṛigu and *guru* of the Daityas. The wisdom of Dharmaruci, Pratāpabhanu's minister, is compared to that of Sukra (B.C. 154).

Sumantra. Daśaratha's minister and charioteer, who drove Rāma, Lakṣmana and Sītā on the first stage of their journey to the forest.

Sumeru. Mount Meru, q.v.

Sumitrā. The wife of king Daśaratha and mother of Lakṣmana and Śatrughna.

Sunāsira. Indra, q.v. The meaning of the name is doubtful.

Sunayanā. The wife of king Janaka and mother of Sītā (B.C. 321).

Suraripu. One of Rāvana's demon warriors (L.C. 62).

Surasā. The sister of Kadru and the mother of serpents, who tried to swallow Hanumān as he leapt across to Lankā, but blessed him when he had outwitted her (S.C. 2ff.).

Sureśa. King of the gods, Indra, q.v.

Sūrpanakhā. The sister of Rāvana, who made advances to Rāma and Lakṣmana with the result that Lakṣmana cut off her nose and ears. When Khara and Dūṣana had been slain in their attempt to avenge her, she incited Rāvana to carry off Sītā (Ar.C. 16ff.).

Susena. A doctor whom Hanumān fetched from Lankā to heal Lakṣmana (L.C. 55ff.). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is Sugriva's physician and attached to Rāma's army.

Sutikṣṇa. A hermit visited by Rāma and his companions in the Dandaka forest. After receiving them hospitably, he took them to visit his *guru* Agastya (Ar.C. 9ff.).

Suvela. A mountain peak on which Rāma and his army encamped after crossing the sea to Lankā (L.C. 11ff.).

Svayaṁbhūva. The first Manu, q.v.

Tārā. The wife of Bāli, who tried to dissuade him from defying Rāma (K.C. 7) and after mourning his loss was consoled and saved by Rāma (K.C. 11).

Tamasā. The modern Tonse, a tributary of the Ganges, on the bank of which Rāma made his first halt on his journey to the forest (A.D. 84).

Tāraka. A demon who by virtue of long austerities obtained two boons from Brahmā; first, that he should be the strongest being in the universe, and second, that he should not be slain save by a son of Śiva. He then proceeded to terrorize the gods till Brahmā resolved to send Kāmadeva to disturb Śiva's contemplation and incite him to love Pārvati. Kāmadeva was consumed by the fiery wrath of Śiva's third eye (see Kāmadeva), but eventually Śiva married Pārvati. No son was born to them until by the intervention of Agni Kārttikeya was miraculously produced. After a severe struggle he slew Tāraka (B.C. 82ff.).

Tārakā. A gigantic female demon, daughter of a Yakṣa Suketu and mother of Mārīca, slain by Rāma on his journey with Viśvāmitra (B.C. 207). Vālmīki tells how she and her son were changed into demons by Agastya's curse and how they ravaged all the surrounding country. Rāma was at first unwilling to kill a woman, but finally did so in obedience to Viśvāmitra's command.

Tirahuta. Mithilā, q.v.

Trijatā. A female demon who was devoted to Rāma and was kind to Sītā in the *asoka* grove (S.C. 11).

Trikūta. The three-peaked mountain on which the city of Lankā stood (B.C. 178).

Tripurāri. Śiva, q.v.

Trīśāṅku. An example of overweening pride (A.C. 229). He was a king of Ayodhyā who wished to celebrate a great sacrifice and by its merit ascend to heaven. He asked Vasīṣṭha to perform the ceremony but he refused. Vasīṣṭha's sons also refused and cursed him so that he became a Cāndāla. To the sins of pride and attempted mischief-making between Vasīṣṭha and his sons he added the sin of killing Vasīṣṭha's cow; and for these three sins three horns grew out of his forehead. He then turned to Viśvāmitra (who had no cause to love Vasīṣṭha) and he promised to perform the sacrifice. When the gods refused to attend it, the sage created new gods. Trīśāṅku was translated to heaven, but as soon as he arrived, Indra hurled him down again. He now hangs head downwards as a constellation in the southern hemisphere, and the saliva that drips from his mouth forms the impure river Karmānāśā, q.v.

Trīśirā. A three-headed son or ally of Rāvana who fought with Khara and Dūṣana against Rāma and was slain (Ar.Ch. 6.).

Trīśirāri. Foe of Trīśirā, Rāma.

Trivikrama. Vāmana. See Viṣṇu.

Tuhinācala. Himālaya, q.v.

Umā. Pārvati, q.v.

Urmilā. Sister of Sītā and wife of Laksmana (B.Ch. 35).

Uttānapāda. The son of Svayambhuva Manu and father of Dhruva, q.v. He succeeded to the throne when his father retired to the Naimiṣa forest (B.C. 142).

Vaidehi. Sītā, q.v.

Vaikuntha. The heaven of Viṣṇu, situated on Mount Meru, to which those whom he saves are translated. There they neither grow old nor die.

Vainateya. Garuḍa, q.v.

Vaitarāṇi. A river which souls have to cross on their way to Yama's realm. It is very broad and swift; its water is hot and evil-smelling and full of blood, bones and hair. Sinners find great difficulty in crossing it, but if any one has given a cow to a Brahman in his lifetime, that same cow helps him across (Ar.C. 2).

Vālmīki. A poet and hermit who is said to have invented the *śloka* and composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in that metre. He was

visited by Rāma and his companions (A.C. 124ff.) and advised them to stay at Citrakūṭa. The *Rāmāyaṇa* opens with an invocation to Vālmīki, presumably not by the poet himself.

It is said that he used to associate with hunters and dacoits, but was converted by the seven seers, who told him to repeat the name of Rāma backwards—*marā, marā*; this he did, remaining immovable for thousands of years, so that when they returned the seers found him still there converted into a *valmīka*, or ant-hill; hence his name (B.C. 3 : B.C. 19 : A.C. 194).

Vāmadeva. A seer at the court of Daśaratha; he was the son of Kaśyapa (B.D. 320). Possibly identical with the author of a number of Vedic hymns, about whose birth strange stories are told.

Vāṇa. A thousand-armed Daitya, the eldest son of Bali, a friend of Śiva and an enemy of Viṣṇu. He was defeated by Kṛiṣṇa, who cut off his arms but spared his life at the intercession of Śiva. He is mentioned in B.C. 247 as having, like Rāvana, been daunted by the might and inflexibility of Śiva's bow.

Vāṇi. Sarasvatī, q.v.

Vāricaraketu. Kāmadeva, q.v.

Vāridanāda. Meghanāda, q.v.

Varuṇa. One of the most important Vedic deities, often associated with Mitra. He is the all-investing sky, to whom the greatest cosmical functions are ascribed. He makes the sun shine; the wind is his breath; the rivers flow at his command; his ordinances are fixed and unassailable; he witnesses men's truth and falsehood and receives the prayers of sinners. He carries a noose, with which he seizes and punishes transgressors (Ar.C. 28). In the Purāṇas Varuṇa has been degraded to the status of sovereign of the waters.

Vasiṣṭha. A Vedic seer to whom many hymns are ascribed. He is reckoned among the *saptarṣi* and the Prajāpatis. In this poem he appears as the family priest of Daśaratha and Rāma's *guru*, and there is no mention of the feud with Viśvāmitra which is the theme of numberless stories. The following, from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, will suffice as an example:—When Viśvāmitra was a king, before his austerities raised him to the rank of Brāhmaṇa, he chanced one day upon Vasiṣṭha's hermitage. Vasiṣṭha received him hospitably and provided all sorts of luscious food and rare drink, supplied by the cow of plenty which he possessed. Viśvāmitra longed to possess the cow and offered his host large sums in exchange for her, but Vasiṣṭha refused to sell her at any price; whereupon Viśvāmitra stole the cow and his servants dragged her away. Escaping, she brought her complaint to her master, who counselled her to create a host of warriors. This she did, but they were all overcome by Viśvāmitra. A second force, however, discomfited Viśvāmitra; his hundred sons were consumed by Vasiṣṭha's wrath and he was compelled to retire. Śiva then provided him with a quantity of celestial weapons and,

returning to the attack, he burnt Vasiṣṭha's hermitage to the ground. But not even Brahmā's shaft could slay the hermit, and Viśvāmitra was at last forced to admit defeat and retire to begin that course of austerities which raised him to Brahmanical status.

Vāsudeva. Viṣṇu, q.v.

Vātajāta. Hanumān, q.v.

Vedaśīrā. A son of Mārkandeya and progenitor of the Bhārgava Brāhmans. He reassured Pārvati's parents when she was about to practise austerities (B.D. 73).

Vena. Mentioned as an example of overweening arrogance (A.D. 228). For his story see Niṣāda.

Veni. Trivenī, the confluence at Prayāga of the Ganges, Jumna and underground Sarasvatī. A great number of devotees assemble there to bathe in the month of Māgha (B.C. 2).

Vibhiṣaṇa. Owing to the Brāhmans' curse Dharmaruci, the pious minister of Pratāpabhānu, was born again as Vibhiṣaṇa, brother of Rāvana (B.C. 176). But he remained a devotee of Viṣṇu, and after vainly remonstrating with his brother, deserted to Rāma's army and was crowned king of Laṅkā after his brother's death.

Videha. Janaka's kingdom, now N. Bihar, of which Mithilā was the capital. The name is often used for king Janaka himself.

Videhakumāri. Sītā, q.v.

Vidhātā. Brahmā, q.v.

Vidhātri. Sarasvatī, q.v.

Vidhi. Brahmā, q.v.

Vidhūntuda. Tormentor of the moon, Rāhu, q.v.

Vijaya. See Jaya.

Vikatāsyā. One of Rāma's monkey warriors (S.D. 54).

Vinatā. Mother of Garura. See Kadrū.

Vināyaka. Ganeśa, q.v.

Vindhyaśala. A mountain range running through central India (B.C. 156). See Agastya.

Virabhadra. A being created from Śiva's mouth and sent to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice (B.C. 65). He had a thousand heads, eyes and feet; clothed in a tiger-skin dripping with blood, he wielded a thousand clubs and shafts, a conch, a discus, a mace, a blazing bow and a battle-axe. He is worshipped in the Mahratta country.

Virādha. A demon slain by Rāma just before he reached Sarabhaṅga's hermitage (Ar.C.6). The incident, barely mentioned in this poem, is fully detailed in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. A Gandharva named Tumburu was cursed by Kuvera and became a gigantic demon, who obtained invincibility as a boon from Brahmā. When he met Rāma and his companions, he seized Sītā, and though assailed by scores of arrows, he would not die. He then dropped Sītā and ran off with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa under his arms. They broke his arms and covered him with wounds, finally digging a huge grave and stamping his body down in it.

Before his death he told them his story, glad to have been released by Rāma.

Virañci. Brahmā, q.v.

Viṣṇu. A member of the *trimūrti* whose function is preservation. His name is said to be derived from the root *viṣ-* to pervade. In the *Rigveda* Viṣṇu is not very prominent; he is a manifestation of the solar energy and strides through the universe in three steps, variously interpreted as denoting fire, lightning and the sun, or the sun's rising, culmination and setting. This description is doubtless the origin of the story of his incarnation as Vāmana, or the Dwarf. He is a friend of Indra and associated with him in his battles with Vṛitra. He does not appear to have been at first associated with the Ādityas, but later he is accorded the first place among them. In the Brāhmaṇas he is identified with sacrifice and described as a dwarf.

In the Epics he is not connected with the sun, but rises to the supremacy he now enjoys as the most popular deity of modern Hindu worship. Although in some passages of the *Mahābhārata* he is represented as paying homage to Śiva, the great rivalry between the gods and their worshippers is not fully developed till the period of the Purāṇas, the Saiva Purāṇas relegating him to an inferior position and the Vaiṣṇavas making him supreme. Tulasi Dās identifies him with Brahman, worshipped by Brahmā and Śiva, but insists that lovers of Rāma must love Śiva too.

As the supreme being, Viṣṇu is often identified with Nārāyaṇa, the primeval living spirit, moving on the waters, reclining on Śeṣanāga on the Ocean of Milk while Brahmā issues from a lotus growing on his navel. His wife is Laksmi, his heaven Vaikunṭha and he rides on Garuḍa; he has four hands, one holding a conch named Pāñcajanya, one a discus, Sudarśana, one a club, Kaumodaki, and one a lotus; his bow is called Śāringa, and his sword Nandaka; on his breast is a mark or curl, Śrivatsa, and the jewel Kaustubha, and on his wrist another jewel, Syaman-taka.

From time to time he descends to earth as an *avatāra*, or incarnation, to deliver mankind from certain great dangers. His *avatāras* are sometimes said to be innumerable, sometimes to number twenty-four, but ten are regarded as principal, of which one is yet to come.

1. Matsya, or incarnation as a fish. This is first mentioned in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* as a manifestation of Prajāpati or of Brahmā. In the Purāṇas the fish is the incarnation of Viṣṇu, come to save Manu Vaivasvata from destruction by a flood. Manu found a small fish, which asked for his protection. The fish grew rapidly and Manu recognized it as Viṣṇu incarnate. At the bidding of the fish Manu embarked in a ship with the *rīgas* and the seeds of all existing things, and the ship was bound to the fish's great horn and thus preserved during the deluge, finally

being stranded on a peak of the Himālayas. Varying accounts of the story are given.

2. Kūrma, or incarnation as a tortoise. Prajāpati as *kūrma* is mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In later accounts Viṣṇu appeared as a tortoise to recover some valuable objects lost in the deluge. He stood at the bottom of the Ocean of Milk with Mount Mandara on his back. The gods and demons, using the serpent Vāsuki, or Śeṣa, as a rope, churned the sea until the objects rose to the top. They were: Amrita, the water of life; Dhañvantari, the physician of the gods; Lākṣmī; Surā, goddess of wine; Candra, the moon; Rambhā, a beautiful nymph; Uccaiḥśravā, a horse; Kaustubha, a jewel; Parijāta, a celestial tree; Surabhi, the cow of plenty; Airāvata, an elephant; Saṅkha, the conch of victory; Dhanus, a bow; and Viṣa, poison, the last of which was drunk up by Śiva. The churning of the ocean receives frequent mention in this poem.

3. Varāha, or incarnation as a boar. The origin of this *avatāra* is also found in more than one Brāhmaṇa. In later legend Viṣṇu became a boar to raise earth with one of his tusks from the bottom of the sea, whither it had been dragged by Hiranyākṣa.

4. Narasimha, or incarnation as a man-lion. Hiranyakāśipu was a demon to whom Brahmā had granted the boon of invulnerability at the hands of gods, men and animals. His son Prahlāda, who had heard religious instruction while still in the womb, was a votary of Viṣṇu; this so enraged his father that he tried to kill him but in vain. One day Hiranyakāśipu demanded to know if Viṣṇu, as omnipresent, was to be found in a stone pillar of the hall and struck it violently; whereupon Viṣṇu emerged from it as a being, half man and half lion, and tore the demon to pieces. Reference is made to the story of Prahlāda in this poem.

These four incarnations took place in the Kṛitayuga.

5. Vāmana, or incarnation as a dwarf. Bali, the Daitya king, had by austerities gained dominion of the three worlds. In order to rob him of his power, Viṣṇu was born as a dwarf, son of Kaśyapa and Aditi. In this form he begged of Bali as much land as he could step over in three paces. When Bali granted his request, he swelled to an enormous size and took two strides over heaven and earth; but he left the dominion of Pātāla to Bali.

This incarnation took place in the Tretāyuga, as did the two following.

6. Paraśurāma, or Rāma with the axe. He was a Brāhman, the fifth son of Jamadagni and Repukā, and descended from Bhrigu. Many stories are told of him in the *Mahābhārata*, for his murder of his mother and his conflict with Rāma, related in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and by Tulasi Dās, see s.v. Paraśudhara. He was born to repress the tyranny of the Kṣatriyas. A certain king called Kārtavīrya, who had a thousand arms, visited Jamadagni in his absence, and after being hospitably entertained by his

wife carried off a sacrificial calf. Paraśurāma pursued Kārtavirya, cut off all his arms and killed him; whereupon the king's sons slew Jamadagni, and Paraśurāma vowed vengeance on the whole Kṣatriya caste. He cleared the earth of Kṣatriyas twenty-one times.

7. Rāma. The hero of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Rāmacaritamānasa* and a great many other poems.

8. Kṛiṣṇa. Kṛiṣṇa, son of Devakī, is mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. He is prominent in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Bhagavadgītā* proclaims that he is the Supreme Being. He is generally regarded as a complete incarnation of Viṣṇu while other *avatāras* are only partial. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* tells the story of his life—the childish pranks of his boyhood and his youthful dalliance with the milkmaids, as well as his later exploits—in the minutest detail. The following is a succinct account of his life from that *Purāṇa* and the *Harivamśa*:

Nārada had foretold to Kāṁsa, a cruel king of Mathurā, that a son of Devakī should destroy him. Kāṁsa caused her first six sons to be put to death, but the seventh, Balarāma, was miraculously preserved, and the eighth, Kṛiṣṇa, was exchanged with the new-born child of a cowherd, Nanda and his wife, Yaśodā. Kāṁsa discovered the fraud and ordered the slaughter of all vigorous male infants. Balarāma and Kṛiṣṇa were brought up in Gokula, and it is to this period that numberless stories of Kṛiṣṇa's dalliance and prowess relate. Kāṁsa constantly tried to bring about his death, but failed and was ultimately slain himself.

Kṛiṣṇa then lived for some time in Mathurā and defeated Jarāsandha, Kāṁsa's father-in-law, who attacked him eighteen times; he then retired to Dvārakā, and while there carried off and married Rukmini, by whom he had a son Pradyumna (see Kāmadeva), slew various demons, stole the celestial tree, Pārijāta, from Indra and performed many other exploits.

It is evident that the Kṛiṣṇa of the *Purāṇas* is very different from the Kṛiṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata*, and especially of that portion of the epic called the *Bhagavadgītā*, where, as Arjuna's charioteer, he instructs that hero in the profoundest and most pure philosophy.

9. Gautama Buddha. Adopted by Hindus as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, perhaps as a matter of religious policy. Viṣṇu is said to have appeared in this form to encourage the wicked to become heretical and thus to effect their own destruction.

10. Kalki. This incarnation has not yet appeared. He will become manifest at the close of the Kaliyuga, seated on a white horse, wielding a drawn sword blazing like a comet, for the final destruction of the wicked, the renovation of creation and the restoration of righteousness.

Viṣṇu has a thousand names. The following occur in this poem:—Hari; Śrinivāsa, Śripati, Ramāpati, Ramāniketa, Kamalāpati (Lord of Lakṣmi); Danujāri (foe of demons); Kharāri

(foe of Khara); Śāringapāni (with the Śāringa bow in hand); Mādhava (descendant of Madhu); Mukunda (perhaps, deliverer); Vāsudeva (son of Vāsudeva); Śrīraṅga; Trivikrama (the god of the three paces).

**Viśvāmitra.** A sage, said variously to be the son of Kuśika, hence called Kauśika, or of Gādhi, hence called Gādhisūna or Gādhitanaya. He appears in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and in this poem as a hermit who asked Daśaratha for the services of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to destroy certain demons who were disturbing his sacrifices. He was the author of hymns in the *Rigveda*, and many stories are told of his rivalry with Vasiṣṭha, q.v. After thousands of years of the severest austerities Viśvāmitra was raised from the rank of Kṣatriya to that of Brāhmaṇa. See also s.v. Triśaṅku.

**Viśvamohani.** The princess of Viṣṇu's magic city, created for the humiliation of Nārada (B.C. 130).

**Viśvanātha.** Śiva, q.v.

**Vṛihaspati.** In the Veda a deity who intercedes with gods on behalf of men and protects mankind against the wicked. He is called the family priest of the gods. Later, he is a *rishi*, regent of the planet Jupiter, and father of Bharadvāja. His wife, Tārā, was carried off by Soma, the moon (A.C. 209 : A.D. 228), and this gave rise to a war in which gods and demons took sides. At the appeal of Earth Brahmā intervened and restored Tārā to her husband.

**Vṛisaketu.** Śiva, q.v.

**Vyāsa.** The Purāṇas mention twenty-eight Vyāsas, incarnations of Viṣṇu or Brahmā, who descended to earth in different ages to arrange and promulgate the Vedas. But the Vyāsa to whom Tulasi Dās does homage (B.C. 14) would be the son of Parāśara and Satyavati, also called Kṛiṣṇa Dvaipāyana, father of Dhṛitarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu. As Vedavyāsa, he is credited with the arrangement of the Vedas and the compilation of the *Mahābhārata*, the foundation of the Vedānta philosophy and the editing of the Purāṇas. But *vyāsa* is a word meaning 'arranger' or 'editor' and it is chronologically impossible to assign all this work to one man.

**Yadu.** Son of king Yayāti of the Lunar race and founder of the Yādava line in which Kṛiṣṇa was born (B.C. 88).

**Yajñavalkya.** An ancient sage, to whom is attributed the authorship of the White *Yajurveda*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Brihadāraṇyaka* and a code of law. He was influential at the court of Janaka and appears to have been somewhat unorthodox in his contentions with other Brāhmaṇas. He had two wives, Maitreyi and Kātyāyani, the former of whom appears in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as carrying on a philosophical dialogue with her father.

He appears in this poem as reciting the story of Rāma to Bharadvāja (B.C. 30).

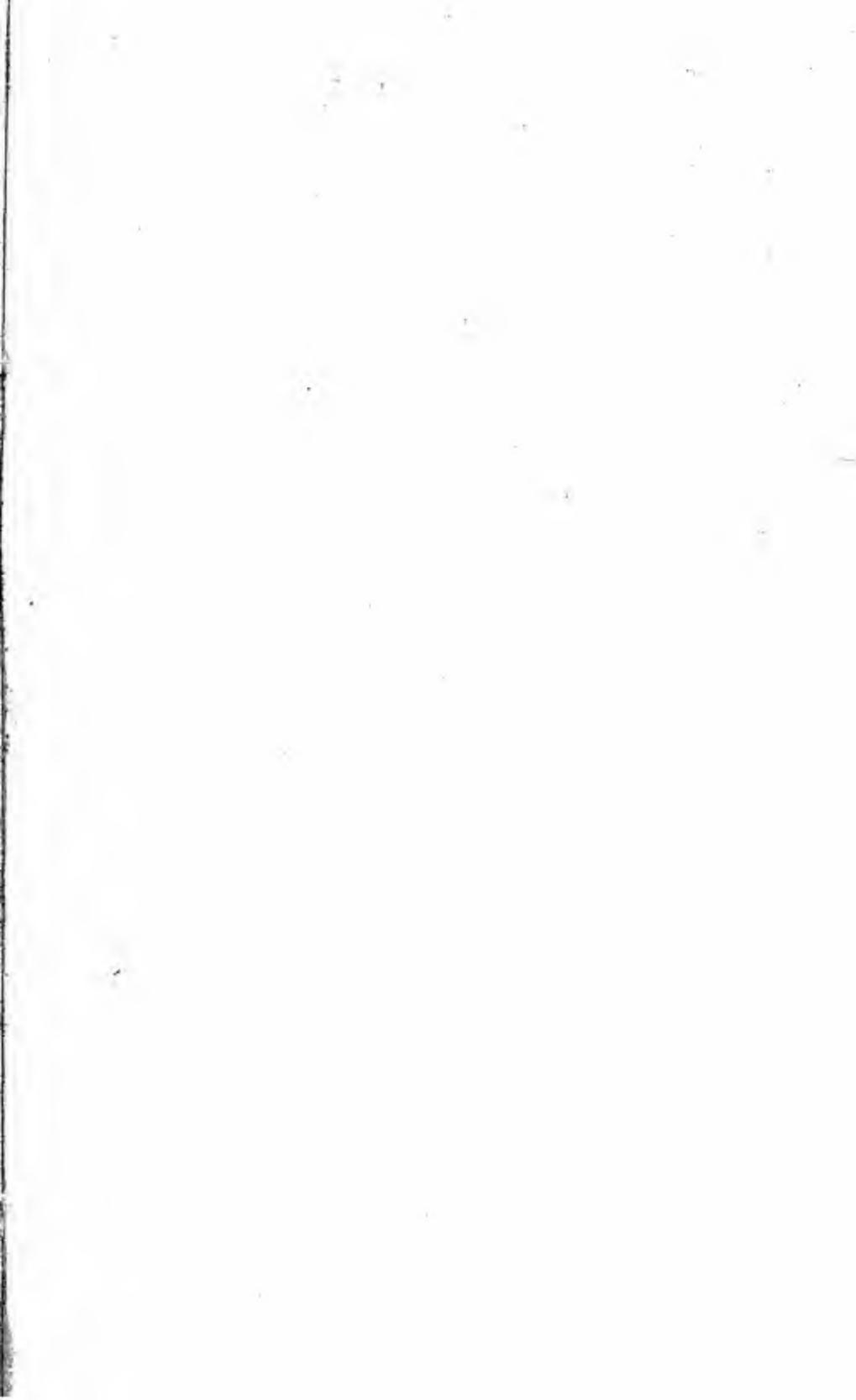
**Yama.** In the Veda Yama and Yami, or Yamunā, are the twin children of the Sun, and Yama is the first to die and depart to the kingdom of the dead. There he receives those who die, but he is not represented in the *Rigveda* as having anything to do with the punishment of the wicked. In the epic period he is the son of the Sun and Sanjñā, brother of Manu Vaivasvata and father of Yudhiṣṭhīra. Two dreadful dogs guard the road to his abode and his messengers go forth to summon men to death. He passes sentence on the dead in accordance with a record read out by Citragupta and sends them to heaven or to the world of the Fathers or to one of the twenty-one hells to be born again in higher or lower forms of being. Yama is regent of the southern quarter and is described as dressed in blood-red garments, with a crown on his head and a noose in his hand, with which he binds the spirit after drawing it from the body, in size about the measure of a man's thumb. He rides on a buffalo. In later mythology he is a terrible deity, inflicting tortures on departed souls. He is called in this poem Śamana and Mahiṣeśa.

**Yamunā.** The river Jumna; Yami, the twin sister of Yama. The river rises in the Himālayas and joins the Ganges at Prayāga. There is a legend that Balarāma in a drunken fit summoned her to come to him that he might bathe, and when she refused, dragged her to him and compelled her to follow him through the woods. The river begged his forgiveness and with difficulty appeased him. As daughter of the Sun, Yamunā is called in this poem Ravitanujā and Ravinandini.

**Yaśodā.** Wife of Nanda the cowherd and foster-mother of Krisṇa (B.C. 20). See Viṣṇu.

**Yavana.** A Greek, or Ionian, probably used for Macedonian or Bactrian. Later, the term was applied to any foreigner or barbarian, almost equivalent to Mleccha, especially to the invading Muslims. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* account of the battle between Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha (q.v.) the cow produced Yavanas among other warriors to fight for her master. A Yavana is mentioned in this poem as one whom Rāma in his mercy saved (A.D. 194 : U.Ch. 14).

**Yayāti.** The son of Nahuṣa and fifth king of the Lunar race. He had five sons, among whom were Yadu, founder of the Yādava line, and Puru, founder of the Pauravas. His infidelity to his wife Devayāṇī brought on him the curse of old age and decrepitude uttered by her father Śukra, but he was allowed to transfer it to a son, if one would consent to exchange his youth for his father's old age and infirmity. Only Puru consented, and thereafter Yayāti spent a thousand years in sensual pleasures. He then restored his youth to Puru and became a hermit (A.C. 174). When finally he ascended to heaven, Indra met him and courteously conducted him to his throne; but he began to boast so extravagantly of his merit that at last there was none left. The gods then hurled him down to earth again (A.C. 148).





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